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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE MODERN FRENCH PLAY AND NOVEL

BY

RUTH ELIZABETH DUNHAM

(A.B., Mount Holyoke College, 1924)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts

1934



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(A. B. HARRIS, 1924)

in general, the study of the human mind is a complex task

which requires the use of many different methods

1924



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## THE MODERN FRENCH PLAY AND NOVEL

### THE DRAMA

General characteristics and influences which led to the Present Day Drama.

In considering the theater and its writers in this first quarter of the twentieth century something about the influences under which the dramatists are writing must be said. One of the great schools by which the writers are influenced is the Naturalist school. The Naturalist theories have done much for the present-day authors. Dumas fils 1824-1895, and Emile Augier 1820-1889 seem to be the precursors of the naturalists. These two men both worked on the basis of the old machinery of a play set up by Eugène Scribe 1791-1861, and Victorien Sardou 1831-1908. These latter two men especially Scribe, who was the transitional dramatist between the romantic and the realist periods, were the fathers of the "pièce bien faite". Scribe's plays have little poetry or style, some even showing little attention to plot. All of Scribe's attention was centered on skillful combination of scenes. He was a master of stage devices and dramatic technique. Three of his well known plays are "La Camaraderie" 1836, "Le Verre d'eau" 1840, "Bataille de dames" 1851. Sardou in his earlier work used to read the plays of Scribe then try to imitate them and develop other acts, and having finished would compare the results with



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Scribe's original. He too, valued the "pièce bien faite" more than the content, though he did pay more attention to his plots than did Scribe. A few of his representative plays are "Les Pattes de Mouche" 1860, "La Famille Benoiton" 1865, "Divorçons" 1880, "La Tosca" 1887, and "Madame Sans-Gêne" 1893. The romantic school began about 1825 and ended about 1845. The naturalist school began about 1860. Between these two schools is a period in which Dumas fils and Augier worked. Augier and Dumas fils clung to the clear-cut rule of the "pièce bien faite" but they began to pay more attention to psychological considerations. They considered the portrayal of character, as the most important duty of the dramatist. Dumas fils inherited from his father a great imagination, but this he curbed with his keen observation of life and people. He attacked particularly contemporary social vices. Love was one of his most used subjects. Woman filled the stage with him as she did in his life. However, he was very bitter against the courtesan. And in his plays he makes the reader feel a bitter disgust against prostitution. Augustin Filon says in his "Modern French Drama" that Dumas's enthusiasm for good becomes a fierce hatred for evil. Many of his plays, in which his characters are drawn with mathematical precision, are thesis dramas. From this is felt his influence in the theater of today, especially in the work of Brieux and de Curel. Both Dumas fils and Augier were unable to submerge themselves in their plays. They both put in an extra person, "le raisonneur",



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whose sole duty was to make the author's comments to the public.

Augier wrote his first plays in verse though he is not a real poet. He is best known for his *comédies de mœurs* in prose. His work is a veritable crusade against wealth and a defense of marriage. Augier came from a fairly well-to-do bourgeois family, and most of his ideas expressed are those of the contemporary bourgeoisie. Augier always exalted the mother role, and demanded fidelity both before and after marriage. Augier forsook the "lover" of the romantics and the classicists and brought out the father of the family. Some of his plays are, "L'Aventurière" 1848, written in verse, "Gabrielle" 1849, also in verse, "Maître Guérin" 1864, and "Madame Caverlet" 1876.

### The Naturalist School

And so one comes to the Naturalist School of which Henry Becque 1837-1899 was the herald. He was the most solid of the Naturalists. He tried to paint life as he saw it. According to the Naturalist standards his work is intense, impassive in its outlook, he neither argues nor moralizes, his outlook on life is surely bitter and somber. His two best plays are "Les Corbeaux" 1882 and "La Parisienne" 1885. In "Les Corbeaux", a bourgeois family of mother and three daughters is left penniless and helpless by the death of the father. The eldest finds favor in the eyes of one of the oldest and richest of the crows who threaten the family. She willingly sacrifices her life to him to save the family. In



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"La Parisienne", the "ménage à trois" is all established at the beginning of the play. The wife has one husband de coeur, and one de raison. Although Becque's work might be called a literature of brutality, he is frank, natural and simple in his vigour, and his pessimism is of a jovial kind. Jules Lemaitre in his "Theatrical Impressions" says of Becque: "Becque presents clearly and powerfully the most astonishing individual deviation from the morality in vogue that has perhaps ever been seen in the theater."<sup>1</sup>

Becque has no glamour and a sort of grim humor. His world is the commonplace one of every day. He subordinates his plot to a painting of manners and characters. Through it all Becque keeps himself indifferent and dispassionate, keeping a middle course. Frank W. Chandler in "The Contemporary Drama of France" says, "Becque is neither hilarious nor sentimental in comedy, neither pathetic nor tragic in serious drama."<sup>2</sup> Becque best shows the artistic possibilities of that "dark cruel stripe of drama called comédie rosse." Since Becque, many bohemians have made it much worse, laughing at the serious and grave things of life, and rejoicing in the ugly, bizarre and criminal.

But the real characteristics of the Naturalist School must be considered. According to Frank W. Chandler in his "Contemporary Drama of France", the Naturalists "emphasize observation rather than imagination, stress facts rather than truths, deem the business of art to be the exact reproduction of actuality."<sup>3</sup>

1. Lemaitre, Jules, "Theatrical Impressions", p. 70.

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3. Ibid., p. 51.



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So the dramatists lessened attention to plot, to stress the order of events and portrayal of characters. They wanted to stress a picture of life, "une tranche de vie", rather than center interest in the plot. Atmosphere, detail and local color were much more important to them than story interest. They omitted the *raisonneur*, and never intruded themselves. Unlike the romantic hero, the Naturalist hero is passive, a mere plaything of Fate. This Fate is the inevitable reaction upon the individual of his race, heredity and environment. The Naturalist tried to apply the methods of science to literature, studying man and his reactions in that way. These Naturalists applied the methods of the physiologist to all moral matters. They studied human passions as dependent upon the physical condition of man, and upon his heredity. Their work is pessimistic and gloomy. Their favorite subjects are vice, crime, morbid longings, distraught minds, sordid evils of the social system, adultery and so on. Chandler says, "Life, they argue, must be faced in its grimmest, and most horrible aspects, only so, can it ever be impersonal."<sup>1</sup> M. Louis Petit de Julleville's definition of naturalism is "l'imitation exacte du naturel en toutes choses." He also says, "L'école moderne est sensualiste jusqu'aux moelles; les personnages sont tout entiers conduits par leur tempérament physique."

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### The Théâtre-Libre

Another strong movement to be considered is that of the Théâtre-libre. This movement was started by André Antoine, the rebel against many things in the theatrical world, at that time. Antoine, now the dean of directors of many of the Paris theatres today, has a great place in dramatic circles. Though he is not actively connected with any theatre, he is a man of great influence. Writers come to him for advice and approval or disapproval, as the case may be, of their plays. He does not hesitate to censure or to praise. He radiates energy and enthusiasm as he did in starting Le Théâtre-libre. When that was started in 1887, Antoine was an employee of the Paris Gas Company, and he had always been much interested in acting in his spare time. The movement, however, soon required all his time, so he gave up his work with the Gas Company to devote all his time to the Théâtre-libre. The purpose of this theatre was to present plays depicting the full truth, unhampered by conventions - plays which would not be accepted at any other theatre many times. There was no civic censorship because it was entirely a subscription affair, and since not open to the public, was therefore not under the censor's power. Antoine owed much to Becque and Emile Zola, 1840-1902, who might be called the fathers of Le Théâtre-libre. What were the purposes of this theatre? As already said, to present plays unhampered by conventions; to use as far as possible actual objects on the stage, instead of pasteboard and wooden objects; to offer plays



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by obscure dramatists who would have no chance otherwise; to present foreign plays or their translations; to have a uniformly well-trained company, rather than a few stars with a weak supporting cast.

As noted above, Zola was a supporter of this movement, although Antoine was no slave to Zola's scientifically brutal work. As Antoine said at a banquet given in his honor, when he resigned from the Théâtre-libre, "I wish to greet in your presence, since the occasion has presented itself to me, two masters, Emile Zola and Henry Becque, to whom I owe all my convictions and all the inspiration which has guided my way. Formerly I admired them passionately at a distance, and it will be the honor of my career that they have been willing to count me their friend."<sup>1</sup> Zola it was who predicted no wings or backdrops, eventually no foot-lights, no lavish display of gowns, no playing up to the audience for effects. Zola's plays themselves did not succeed, probably because he was a preacher of science. Obsessed by the scientific mania, he was not a sympathetic author. A play with no poetry or imaginative fancy, with only science, will not live. Antoine in his theatre was much in favor of stage realism. If a juggler was needed, he had a real juggler in the cast. Antoine was the first to use real candles and lanterns on the stage, also, he used no footlights. His idea was that the stage was just like a room, one wall of which was open to the public, therefore the actors must act as though they were living a normal life in a

1. Waxman, Samuel M., "Antoine and the Théâtre-Libre", p. 153.



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room. Antoine wrote Sarcey in regard to the stage setting of "La Parisienne", when he went to see it with a view of presenting it in his theatre, "And that salon, Did you ever see in the home of a Paris bourgeois a salon like it? Is that the dwelling of a chief clerk? A dwelling without the slightest suggestion of a corner where one may feel as one does in the house of any of us, that there is somewhere a preferred spot for a chat, an armchair where one may loaf, after the day's work is done?"<sup>1</sup> And later in the letter, "I know your objection, the setting is secondary. Yes, perhaps, in the classic play, all right. But why not use a realistic setting, since it can be done with care and moderation, and would in no way injure the play?"<sup>2</sup>

"What do you expect," says Antoine, "will become of a play that is filled with life and movement if it is placed in a falsified atmosphere?" So Antoine allowed his actors to turn their backs on the audience. Though the critics and the audience laughed at this, Antoine continued. He himself was a great actor. Only a fine actor could hold his audience quiet and attentive during a twenty-five minute monologue, as Antoine did when playing the lawyer in "La Fille Elisa". Antoine always took painstaking care in the dramatic detail of his theatre. He, also, was the first to successfully put a mob on the stage. This was shown in his skill with the crowds in Hauptmann's play, "The Weavers", which is a social treatise, a series of detached scenes, in which crowds of starved and wretched weavers play a

1. Waxman, Samuel M., "Antoine and the Théâtre-Libre", p. 138.  
2. Ibid.







big part. The Théâtre-Libre has had great influence because, in the first place, through it were brought to light many of our present-day dramatists, such as Brieux, de Curel, and Porto-Riche. Then, the theatrical world has a more friendly feeling toward foreign dramatists and their work. Antoine had Ibsen's "Ghosts" translated and given. He presented plays of the Swedish Strindberg, such as "Miss Julia", another example of brutal French realism. Thus today's realism in the stage settings is directly responsible to Antoine's Théâtre-Libre. And surely our twentieth century "Little Theaters" are direct descendants. Antoine did much to free the drama from its too rigid rules. Le Théâtre-libre itself went from naturalism to realism, then to symbolism. Many of the writers of the Théâtre-Libre abandoned the customary five acts and wrote two, three, or four acts. Bernstein and Brieux prefer three acts, Bataille prefers four. Most of these writers have omitted the entr'acte and group the scenes as they wish, not according to the former laws. Hervieu alone sometimes clings to the old conventions. In "Les Tenailles", some of his scenes are very, very short. There are still some "ficelles" or stage tricks used. For example in Brieux's "Blanchette", it is a comb; in Bataille's "Le Phalène", some half-smoked initialed cigarettes; in Hervieu's "Connais-toi", a glove is the instrument used.

William Lyon Phelps says of this school, "These authors are all clever dramatists but not men of ideas." They prefer to study realism rather than reality. They suggest activity without vitality.



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### The Dramatists of this Period

The writers will be grouped according to the type of play they write. The first group might be termed Moralists. These writers are interested in psychology, some more profoundly than others. Some of them write thesis plays but all of them have a definite purpose in their plays.

FRANÇOIS DE CUREL was born in 1854, at Metz. He studied engineering in France, but, because he had adopted French citizenship, could not follow his profession in the factories which belonged to his family in Lorraine. His work shows originality, depth and power. He is always enthusiastic, and seems somewhat more refined than other writers of his period. He presents interesting problems but often fails to bring them to any conclusion, thus leaving his audience a bit disconcerted. However his studies of individual and social psychology are very well done. His style is harmonious and quite fascinating. He seems to unite poetry with reality. M. Lanson says of him, "M. de Curel écrit la plus belle langue qu'on ait de nos jours entendue sur le théâtre. Il faut le mettre très haut pour l'estimer assez."<sup>1</sup> Chandler calls him a strange, imaginative genius, "intent upon developing peculiar situations and following the mental obsessions of unusual folk."<sup>2</sup> He learned to like the sad, gloomy form of the Théâtre-libre and was interested in morbid psychology, but his treatment of the theme is novel - he awakens sympathy. He seems to fuse the real with the romantic. Curel was a wealthy

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2. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 191.



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man whose writing was his avocation, and so he wrote to please himself, not the public. Clark speaks of him as "a man of genius with the courage of his convictions." Auguste Filon in "Modern French Drama" speaks of Curel as "a proud concentrated rather wild nature with a complicated and rather bizarre moral nature."<sup>1</sup> "Curel sings," he says, "the praises of atavism and makes light of the tie of blood."<sup>2</sup>

One of his earliest and most important plays is "L'Envers d'une Sainte" 1892. It is interesting that this play is one in which the characters are all women, except in the case of the unimportant Georges--merely an accessory. There is much of the abstract in "L'Envers d'une Sainte". He took the idea from a newspaper article, Clark records. Curel made a deep psychological study of the character Julie. Nearly eighteen years before the play opens, Julie had attempted to kill the young wife of the man she loved, by pushing her into a ravine. The wife is not killed but her baby is born prematurely. The wife, Jeanne, knowing Julie's feelings, does not tell of the attempt on her life. Julie goes to a convent to stay till the man she loves is dead. She then returns to her own mother and sister. From then on, it is a struggle between Julie and Jeanne for the memory of the man they both love. Julie's influence is not good on Christine, the daughter of Jeanne. In the end Julie returns to the convent to end her days in repenting. "Les Fossiles" is his second play. This has for its subject the French aristocracy of the day. This

1. Filon, Augustin, "Modern French Drama", p. 117.

2. Ibid., p. 127.



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is a very well done play. Curel being a noble himself, perhaps he knew best how to express the true nobility of heart. It concerns the family of De Chantemelle supposedly famous all through French history. Robert, the only son is very ill, has only a few months to live, in fact. The whole family is distressed that there will be no future Duke to carry on the line. Robert confesses to his mother that he has a son by his mistress, Hélène, a companion to his sister, Claire. Really the child is the Duke's, not Robert's, but the Duke does not tell that at first, and has Robert marry Hélène in order to have the child become a De Chantemelle. Because Hélène wants to leave the family after Robert's death, and because the family want the child to be brought up as a Duke should be, the Duke has to tell Robert the child is really his and one of them must die. Robert, since he has so short a time to live, is the one, so he goes back north to their ancestral home and in the cold, dies there. His will, read in the last act at his bier, contains his wishes for the heir and also the essence of what the "fossil" nobility has to say of its dying hopes. "Let us remain true to our traditions in sacrificing our lives by generous errors, thereby establishing it as a fact that the nobility is a school of disinterestedness, pointing out the way to the generation, daring of thought, fearless of heart..... It seems to me that the day of the aristocracy is past; it has been recruited too much from the moneyed classes, too little on the basis of true merit. It has ever been closed to the great



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men who have sprung from the people and the people have reciprocated. Before it finally disappears, it must give, by means of a pious lie, the same impression given by those gigantic fossils<sup>1</sup> which turn our minds back to prehistoric antiquity." Curel's later plays are "Le Repas du Lion" 1897, "La Nouvelle Idole" 1899, "La Fille Sauvage" 1902, "Le Coup d'aile" 1906, "La Danse devant le miroir" 1914, in some ways his most subtle and complex work. "Régine imagines that love can be trifled with; she wishes to prove the strength of her lover's affection. She wants to know whether Paul is a hero. Will he, she asks, sacrifice even his honor for her? She allows him to believe that she has been seduced, that he ought to save her by marrying her, for she is expecting a child. But Paul has been told by a friend of Régine, that this is a lie, yet he cannot resist the temptation to appear in a heroic light, so that the two lovers, wishing all the time to see one another as they really are, play a dangerous comedy, which results in a tragedy. The night of their wedding they want to clear up all deceptions of the past.....yet each is condemned to solitude. The object of one's affection remains merely a mirror which reflects one's own image, distorted and falsified. During a lucid interval, Paul sees that the only way he can leave a magnificent and worthy<sup>2</sup> memory of himself is to commit suicide, and this he does." The exceedingly difficult task of making this story real, Curel has accomplished. His attempts at comedy, however, failed. "L'Amour brode", which is an earlier version of "La Danse devant

1. Curel, François de, "Les Fossiles", Acte IV, Scène VIII.

2. Clark, Barrett H., "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 16.



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le miroir", and "La Figurante" are spoiled by an uncertainty of purpose.

PAUL HERVIEU was born in 1857, at Neuilly-sur-Seine, and he died in 1915. This author shows the influence of Becque in his gloomy, fatalistic, pessimistic plays. Hervieu is an ardent defender of the rights of women. Hervieu seems to write with a contempt for petty devices, in a severe style, and with much concentration. He presents his ideas clearly but coldly. By eliminating all secondary incidents, he develops a clear, concise plot very logical in structure. His work is full of concrete details. He might be called a deductive dramatist. He likes to show the instinct of people. Chandler says of him, "Classical not only in his taste for purity of form and clearness of expression, but also in his conception of life as involving the control of the heart by the mind."<sup>1</sup> Clark says he shows mathematical precision in showing men and women struggling with faulty social conditions. Hervieu wrote thesis plays, he always wrote with a purpose. He is to be classed as a moralist. One of his first stories is "Les Paroles restent" 1892. A young marquis starts a slanderous story about a young woman, Régine. Later they find out the story is untrue. The marquis falls in love with Régine whose elderly suitor, a baron, has jilted her because of the gossip. The baron and the marquis fight a duel and the young marquis is wounded. He might have recovered, but while sick, he hears visitors still telling the gossip. In wrath he tries to get up, thus

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 208.



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reopening his wounds. He dies as a result. One of the visitors says, "Could we but have foreseen! One gossips, yet what of that! Words pass!" The physician replies, "No Madame, words remain and they slay." Here is Hervieu writing against the power of scandal. In 1895 appeared "Les Tenailles". Here Hervieu is against the tyranny of the marriage law. Irène, the wife, had married Fergon while very young. She is oppressed by her "cold and correct" husband and wants a divorce. This he refuses, so she turns to a lover, Michel, by whom she has a child René, whom Fergon thinks is his own child. Years later when Michel has died, Fergon wants René sent away to school. Another struggle ensues between husband and wife with the result that Irène tells him René is not his child. Then it is Fergon who wants the divorce, and Irène who refuses to grant it. She will deny everything and knows Fergon does not want the public disgrace. The result is they stay together--tied to the same ball and chain. Irène's last words are, "Nous sommes deux malheureux. Au fond du malheur il n'y a plus que des égaux." In 1897 appeared "La loi de l'homme", showing a fine balance and symmetry of design. In 1901 "La Course du flambeau" shows that a mother will sacrifice more for her child than will the child for her mother. Sabine, the mother, does all for her child Marie-Jeanne, giving up a happy marriage, stealing money from her own mother to help Marie's husband in business. On a trip to Engadine for her health Marie's grandmother is to accompany her in spite of the grandmother's bad health. Sabine



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thinks, if she dies on the trip, then Marie will have her money. Marie, in better health, deserts her mother for her husband so Sabine turns to her mother for comfort but her mother dies. Sabine then exclaims "She is dead! For my daughter I have killed my mother!" Women are the principal characters because instinct is more potent in them than in men according to the author. "Le Dédale" in 1903 is thought by some to be one of his chefs d'oeuvre. This play contains two fine, truly pathetic characters, Marianne and Guillaume. Marianne, the divorced wife of Max, has one little boy. She marries Guillaume Le Breuil. After the marriage, Max comes to Marianne to ask a share in the child's time and education. While Louis the child is at his father's house he gets diphtheria. His mother and father both fight for his return to health and over his sick bed find they still love each other. Marianne returns to her husband whom she now loaths and one evening he intercepts a letter from Max saying that he is coming to see her. Guillaume and Max meet on a cliff over the Rhone. They fight and both fall into the chasm. The voice of Marianne is heard in the distance and at the end Marianne is seen leading the child to the house where he is to grow to manhood and "work out his destiny". In 1909 appeared "Connais-toi" then "Bagatelle" in 1912, and in 1914 "Le Destin est maître", a tragedy in two acts. In this play, Juliane Béreuil, the wife, is a fine character. Her husband away at the first of the play, is to be tried on a charge of embezzlement.



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Juliane's brother, Séverin tries to regulate the affair and save the family honor. Gaëtan, the husband comes from Paris to try to get funds to escape the country. Séverin gives him the choice of facing the charge or killing himself--offering him the gun himself. That scene is very powerful. Gaëtan refuses both and Séverin shoots him. Juliane, who was at church during this scene, learns the truth from her brother who goes away to join the Foreign Legion as his punishment.

EUGÈNE BRIEUX born in 1858, is the next one to consider. He was born in Paris, the son of a cabinet-maker. While he was an employee of a bank, Antoine brought him to the public's attention. A man of the people, Brieux writes plays of a rough, honest, healthy nature. He loves the thesis play and is essentially a reformer. His plots move slowly but strongly. His whole work shows a broadminded sympathy with humanity. He seems one of the broadest and least prejudiced of men, ready and able to discuss any social or literary question. He is decidedly sincere and wants to help humanity. He is very keen to observe any abuse and notices all kinds of conditions. Here is a list of his plays and the social evils which they are aimed against.

"Blanchette"	against-Certain aspects of the educational system.
"M. de Réboval and La Couvée"	against-ménage-à-trois and marriage laws.
"L'Engrenage"	against-political abuses



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"L'Intrigue" against-political abuses

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"Les Bienfaiteurs"	against-indiscriminate charity
"L'Evasion"	against-abuse of science and medicine
"Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont"	against-certain aspects of the marriage question
"Résultat des Courses"	against-Gambling in working classes
"Le Berceau"	against-Divorce
"La Robe Rouge"	against-Abuse of law and system of promotion
"Les Remplaçantes"	against-Recruiting of wet- nurses
"Les Avariés"	against-conspiracy of silence regarding the nature and treatment of venereal diseases
"La Petite Amie"	against-marriage laws and relations of parents and children
"Maternité" }	concerned with mother- hood and marriage
"La Déserteuse" }	
"Les Hannetons"	against-free love
"La Française"	vindication of French women and family
"Simone and Suzette"	pleas for child of divorced parents



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against-abuse of science and medicine	"L'Évolution"
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against-Divorce	"Le Bérouin"
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against-Revolting of wet-nurses	"Les Rompagnettes"
against-conspiracy of alliance regarding the nature and treatment of venereal diseases	"Les Avariés"
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concerned with motherhood and marriage	"Métaphysique"
against-free love	"La Désertion"
vindication of French women and family	"Les Hammetons"
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	"Simone and Gertrude"



"La Foi"

-questions validity of  
accepted faith in  
religion

"La Femme Seule"

-shows essential economic  
dependence of French  
woman

"Le Bourgeois aux champs"

-satire on futility of<sup>1</sup>  
immediate reform."

Because of his convictions Brieux often sacrificed himself as an artist to the good of the race. In "Blanchette" which achieved a fine success at the Théâtre-libre, a girl is educated out of her station by her father, an innkeeper in a small town. She helps her father by advising him, but while waiting for a position to teach, her father wants her to wait on his customers. This she refuses to do, taking refuge in the home of a friend of hers in the village. This friend's brother seduces her and she descends to the depths. "Blanchette" has three different endings which Brieux has given it for different theatres. In "La Deserteuse", Jean Sigaux's wife deserts him for a lover. On her return, she finds her husband married to her daughter's governess. However, the daughter, Pascaline, responds more to her own mother than to her stepmother. Brieux has done more than any other contemporary author probably, toward showing that the theatre is, or should be concerned with a sense of social responsibility. The theatre was in danger of becoming purely a frivolous thing, but he says, "As time passes the

1. Clark, Barrett H., "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 22.



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home of a friend of hers in the village. This friend's brother

on his customers. This she refuses to do, taking refuge in the

waiting for a position to teach, her father wants her to wait

small town. She helps her father by advising him, but while

educated out of her station by her father, an innkeeper in a

which achieved a fine success at the Theatre-Libre, a girl is

himself as an artist to the good of the race. In "Blanchette"

Because of his convictions Brieux often sacrificed

immediate reform."

-ative on utility of

woman

dependence of French

-shows essential economic

religion

accepted faith in

-questions validity of

"La Folie"

"La Femme Nerve"

"Le Bourgeois aux champs"



theatre will be obliged more and more to devote itself to the great current problems."<sup>1</sup> In another place he states, "Had I lived in the seventeenth century I would have been a preacher, but now I write plays."<sup>2</sup> M. Lanson writes, "M. Brieux, talent probe, puissant, un peu fruste et un peu gros, étudie des cas sociaux. Il découvre et sonde, d'une main un peu rude, les plaies vives de la conscience et de la société moderne. Il applique successivement son observation, à la fois précise et sommaire, aux institutions charitables, à la magistrature, aux désespérantes doctrines de l'hérédité: il dit sur toutes ces choses un mot juste, sans nuance. Son art est comme sa pensée: clair, fort, sans tricherie et sans finesse. Et ce n'est pas un mérite médiocre."<sup>3</sup> Brieux is really a missionary, a social reformer, not a dramatist.

EMILE FABRE, born at Metz in 1870, is another author whom Antoine brought out. He is a reformer in the sense that he has always been interested in problems of finance, questions of administration and colonization rather than questions of private and domestic life. His characters are always characters affected by social pressure. As a disciple of Brieux he has produced realistic plays of moralistic tendencies. So many of his pieces deal with greed for gold and show a certain bitter indictment of society. "L'Argent" is one of his best known plays. In this piece the heirs quarrel over the property of an invalid. Reynard, the invalid, makes a will leaving half his fortune to his wife. His two children and his son-in-law

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 235.
2. Ibid.
3. Lanson, Gustave, "Histoire de la littérature française", p. 1158.



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 great current problems. In another place he states, "And I  
 lived in the environment whereby I would have been a preacher,  
 but not I write plays." M. Janson writes, "M. Janson, before  
 going, and after, in the house of his father, Janson, was a  
 socialist. He believed in social, but not in political, reform.  
 He was a man of the conscience as to his social problems. He  
 applied successively to the various, to the social reform of  
 domestic, and international relations, to the political, and  
 to the economic relations as I indicated; if this was to be  
 chosen in any future, and perhaps, for the sake of the world;  
 that, for, and perhaps, for the sake of the world. It is not  
 an active movement. Janson is really a visionary, a social  
 reformer, not a dramatist.

ERNEST JANSSEN, born at Paris in 1870, is another author  
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through jealousy, tell the father about the secret past of his wife in order to get more of her money. "La Vie Publique" 1902, gives a political note. Ferrier, the mayor of a city, in order to be elected must give appointments to different men. He has always stood against unscrupulousness. If he gives up his own position he would force many others out of theirs. Because of their pleading that if he is willing to give up his own position he should think of them, he gives in. The election campaign is on, helped by many false friends. In the midst of it the Mayor's banker leaves with all his funds. Ferrier's daughter thus becomes dowerless. He wins the election and, in his triumph, allows all he would have otherwise condemned. So his political victory is thus a moral defeat. Fabre's other plays are "Les Ventres dorés" 1905, "La Maison d'argile" 1907, "Les Sauterelles" 1911 and "Un Grand Bourgeois" 1914. Fabre has given to the French stage a fresh attention to detail, an interest in movement and above all a recognition that a crowd may figure as an important accessory in a play.

JULES LEMAITRE, who was born in 1853 at Vennecy and died in 1914, is essentially a critic and perhaps because of his wide knowledge and catholic taste as a critic, he seems to be so eclectic. He reacted against the rough and rude of the Théâtre-libre, and against the artificial of the Scribe school. Chandler says, "Lemaître is an artist skilled and careful, a moralist conservative yet indulgent."<sup>1</sup> Lemaître had an easy, informal, conversational way of writing. His characterization

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at times is excellent. He is very open-minded and free from prejudice. Lemaître is a "new comedy moralist", still clinging to some points of Dumas and Augier. He is able to express the fine shades and gradations of human emotions. Again perhaps not much can be said for Lemaître's morality. Lemaître is profound, but he amuses us with his wit and amusing anecdotes. "Révoltée", produced in 1889, was one of his first plays, "crude and full of influences",<sup>1</sup> but there are good characterizations in it. Comtesse de Voves, the heroine, is at the opening of the play, married to a professor, and mother of a grown son. She has kept from her family for twenty years the fact that she had a daughter, born before her marriage. This daughter, she had helped as a friend. Because of the unhappiness of this daughter, now married herself, the Comtesse tells the daughter Hélène and her own son, André, the truth. From Hélène she receives only indifference, and from André, hatred, so the mother has to suffer still. "Le Député Leveau" 1890, "Mariage blanc" 1891, "Le Pardon" 1895, "La Massière" 1904, are well written and each of his plays shows improvement over the one preceeding. "L'Age difficile" 1895, is perhaps his greatest work. With perfect ease Lemaître takes his hero a man of middle age, through many dangerous love affairs and entertains with a series of delightful "genre scènes". This play was written with the idea of M. Coquelin the actor, playing the leading role. M. Lanson says, "M. Lemaître, sans répudier bruyamment la technique établie, sans déconcerter les habitudes

1. Clark, Barrett H., "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 124.



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 I. Girard, Héros R., "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 131.



du public, sans prétention philosophique aussi et sans fracas de symboles, nous avait, dès son début donné la sensation rafraîchissante d'une originalité sincère. Une fine psychologie, vécue et sentie, non livresque ni théâtrale, d'où l'émotion sortait d'elle-même sans violences et sans ficelles, fait le mérite éminent des principales oeuvres qu'il a écrites, où par surcroît il a mis toutes les grâces de son esprit et la forme exquise de son style. Il a traité les problèmes de la vie intérieure avec plus de bonheur et de délicatesse que les études sociales où il a porté une observation un peu grosse. Il a débattu des cas de conscience subtils et douloureux avec une philosophie clairvoyante et humaine.<sup>1</sup>

HENRI BERNSTEIN was born at Paris in 1876. He is a disciple of Scribe and Sardou. His plays show rapidity of movement and ingenuity in producing tense scenes or crises: for this reason, in his desire to get these scenes, Bernstein will sometimes distort his characters. Bernstein wants a play to be theatrically perfect, in that, showing his following of Scribe. His first play "Le Marche" in 1900 is the story of a woman so devoted to her husband that she will save him from misery even at the price of her honor. Antoine played the leading male role in this. Further plays of Bernstein are "Le Detour" 1902, "Joujou" 1902, "Le Bercail" 1904, "La Rafale" 1905, and "La Griffe" 1906. Through these plays we see Bernstein's rather hazy character portrayal and growing stress on melodrama. "La Griffe" shows a woman essentially wicked.

1. Lanson, Gustave, "Histoire de la Littérature française", p. 1126.



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Antoinette has one lover after another as her husband rises from leader of the radicals to senator and to minister. At the last, she refuses to do anything to save him from disaster, when she easily could. In the end the husband loses his mind, and Antoinette seems little bothered as long as she can have her lovers. "Le Voleur" appeared in 1906, "Israël" in 1908, "Après Moi" in 1911 and on to "L'Assaut" 1912, "Le Secret" 1913 and "L'Elévation" 1917. "L'Elévation" shows the dramatic force and originality of Bernstein, his "scenic dexterity but characters of mud". No doubt there are such people in the world but surely not as many as Bernstein would make us think. "L'Elévation" has some aspects of the Great War in it. The wife of a medical professor has fallen in love with an officer. When he goes to Verdun, the husband who has suspected the truth, gets the confession from Suzanne. He forgives her and almost as strangers they work in the hospitals. Soon the lover, de Genois, is wounded and at first the husband does not want Suzanne to go to him, trying to prevent it by tales of the former life of de Genois. But finally he relents. De Genois tells Suzanne himself of his life and his rebirth because of war and love for her. She vows she will not live without him but he tells her it is easy to die, it is a greater thing to live for any cause--no matter how small. The dying soldier says "War is horrible, barbarous but it has done one thing--it has lifted human beings from the mire of their selfishness." So is found a new Bernstein, one whose "art is becoming less



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HENRI LAVEDAN born in 1859, is according to Frank W. Chandler an "ironic realist". He began as a journalist and short story writer. The creed of the realist seems to be--to face facts of life--not to run away; to look upon the actual being, neither depressed nor elated; to use observation and not let the heart or conscience influence one's outlook on life. Lavedan followed this fairly well, though at times it does seem as though his observation was mostly guesswork. He has a fine wit and more invention, humour, and more of the unexpected, in some ways, than many other authors. He depicts the contemporary manners, particularly the vicissitudes of descendants of the old nobility in the republic of today. He has "tenderness and a great respect for all that is pure, a great pity for all that is weak."<sup>2</sup> Lavedan is very catholic in his tastes--he finds that love is not all of life. He likes character portrayal for its own sake. "Le Prince d'Aurec" is an excellent portrait. But Lavedan paints all kinds and sorts of people with the greatest ease. He is witty, indulgent and "mildly moral". His plays show great variety of subject matter. "Variety is the spice of Lavedan's performance which ranges from the trifling to the grave, from the naughty to the nice, from the satire to the stern, from the fantastic to the impassioned."<sup>3</sup> And always he writes with a clever, spontaneous dialogue so that the plays move with verve. Probably one of Lavedan's greatest plays is

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 50.
2. Filon, Augustin, "Modern French Drama", p. 206.
3. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 140.



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1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 30.
2. Wilson, Augustin, "Modern French Drama", p. 200.
3. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 140.



"Le Prince d'Aurec", a study of the old nobility, this, a brilliant and vigorous work, is one of the bitterest, keenest satires at the expense of the weaknesses, queernesses, and vices, the folly and corruption of the noblesse. The Prince d'Aurec, a dissipated nobleman, has done nothing but spend all his own money and that of his family. He has spent all his mother's saved money, and all his wife's dowry. What to do as the play opens. La Princesse owes 200,000 francs to her dress-maker and the Prince lost, the night before 400,000 by gambling. The mother, however, through De Horn, a Jewish banker, tries to save the day. He, De Horn, represents the "money king". He is willing to help to win favor in the eyes of La Princesse - who refuses him and something rouses the better nature of Le Prince d'Aurec. The banker openly says, "What have I left? I wanted La Princesse, I haven't her, I gave you money, I haven't it!" Finally La Duchesse, the mother, saves the situation by offering to pay De Horn and so frees her children. The play ends, La Princesse à son mari, "Remercie ta mère, elle le mérite."

La Duchesse - "Es-tu content de moi? Ai-je été duchesse de Talais?"

Le Prince - "Oui, c'est vous qui êtes noble. C'est moi, qui ne le suis pas!"

La Duchesse - "Quand le seras-tu?"

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La Duchesse - "La guerre? Tu te feras tuer?"

Montade - "Pas plus que nous tous."

Le Prince - "Il y a la manière."

Through the whole play we find the only one to really preserve faith in the noblesse, and uphold it, is the Duchesse de Talais, born the daughter of a butter merchant. This same subject is found in "Les Deux Noblesses" 1894, linked with the former play by means of a "romanesque fable". Again with nobility as a subject, in 1902 appeared "Le Marquis de Priola". This nobleman who plays with all the women, preaches an Epicurean philosophy to his young ward and friend, later discovered to be his own son. The nobleman has three mistresses, his former wife, her emissary, and Thérèse. Pierre finds out that he is the Marquis's son and in his beratings of his father, tells him that nature will revenge him for his excesses. Just then the father has a stroke which leaves him a blind paralytic-- and Pierre as his attendant. Pure comedy is in his play "Le nouveau Jeu" 1898. The hero, Paul Costard, on a bet with his mistress, woos and marries Alice, a mere acquaintance. Of course, Paul does not love Alice, nor does she love Paul, so both go to former lovers. They then get a divorce, and as the judge rebukes them for having married at all, Costard says, "Marriage is like spinach, in order to dislike it, you must first taste it!" "Le Duel" 1905 is probably one of Lavedan's



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best plays. Here Lavedan is a moral analyst. The duel is between two brothers, one a priest, once a free liver who has now become an ascetic; the other a physician once a mystic, now a skeptic. The physician loves the wife of an old patient of his, a duke. The priest tries to warn the Duchess against loving a man not her husband. The physician finds his brother and the Duchess together thus making the two brothers rivals. The physician tries to make his brother leave the church. However, the Duke commits suicide fortunately, and the visiting Bishop solves the deadlock by having the physician marry the Duchess, and the priest go to serve in a leper colony.

HENRI RENÉ LENORMAND was born in 1882 at Paris.

Lenormand really belongs in a class by himself. Vitally interested in the subconscious, he is the Eugene O'Neil of the French stage. His work is still a new development, but Lenormand is probably the most important French dramatist of today. He did write some plays before the war, as for example, "Les Possédés" which was performed at the Théâtre des Arts in 1909. His greatest work, however, has been done since the war. Lenormand, as a leader in the dramatic life of France today, believes that a great deal can be expressed by other means than mere words. He is a believer in silences for effect. Lenormand is above all a psycho-analyst who deals with subconscious motives and impulses. This dramatist is not a moralist. Apparently, he wishes to show human beings as he thinks they react to life. In his play "Le Mangeur de Rêves", Luke, the



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hero, is always trying to analyze the dreams of the different women with whom he comes into contact. Fearon, by his suggestions, he has made into a woman who loves evil in any form. Jeannine Felse is a woman obsessed by queer ideas that she killed her mother. Luke thinks he loves her and together they travel a great deal, Luke continually trying to analyze Jeannine. They eventually come to Christian's Grave where Jeannine's mother was killed by the natives. Little Jeannine, then five years old, had innocently given away the hiding place of her mother and herself during an attack by the natives. Fearon is also at Christian's Grave and by her powerful will and suggestions forces Jeannine to go out to the grave and kill herself. Fearon then tells Luke, confessing she loves him and therefore made Jeannine kill herself. Luke is powerless before this woman and the play ends with Fearon saying "I too devour dreams."

"L'homme et ses Fantômes" was first produced in Paris at the Odéon, June 11, 1924. This play shows Man who goes from one affair after another with various women, always unsatisfied. Among the women are Alberta, who died in a hospital after following him all over the world, and Laura who died in an insane asylum as a result of her affair with the Man. The Man eventually takes up spiritualism but is haunted by the phantoms of all the women who have been in his life. As he dies, he calls on his young friend Patrick--the only person he has loved--to save him from the phantoms. But the ghosts jeer



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at him for this love.

The next group is composed of three dramatists whose main subject is love.

GEORGES DE PORTO-RICHE was born at Bordeaux in 1849. This writer belongs to the group called by Frank W. Chandler, "the laureates of love". Porto-Riche reveals play of character upon character under contemporary conditions. As Chandler says of him, "his work reveals skill in expression, economy of structure, deftness in the use of innuendo. He is sensual, suggestive, sensitive, and his dialogue commends him to the connoisseur for its distinction of style."<sup>1</sup> Porto-Riche seems too sensual, he has a "continual obsession of the senses,"<sup>2</sup> Barrett Clark says of him in "Contemporary French Dramatists". Like many other contemporary writers, Porto-Riche first studied law to give it up for drama. He has a distinct gift of style and a genius for analyzing the feminine soul. He writes delicate and exquisite studies of married life. Porto-Riche analyzes love in his plays--his theatre is often called "Le Théâtre d'Amour". Love is the main subject, if not adultery, as with so many of the contemporary writers. "La Chance de Françoise" written in 1888, a one-act play, is the first mature work of Porto-Riche. This started at the Théâtre-libre but soon went to the Comédie Française where it is still played. Françoise is the wife of Marcel, an artist, who had three years before had the wife of his friend, Guérin, as his mistress. Françoise is jealous, though she doesn't know of whom, and

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 95.
2. Clark, Barrett, "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 40.



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Marcel who really loves her, seems to love the former mistress, Madeleine, until she returns and tells him she has another lover. Marcel is to be used as a cover for this new lover, and so is to fight a duel with her husband, Guérin. Guérin comes to find Marcel and meets Françoise, who pours out her woe to him. He pities her so much that he refuses to fight Marcel and so Marcel and Françoise are left to each other--Marcel's last words being to his wife "La chance de Françoise" and to himself sadly "marié"!

"L'Infidèle" in 1890 was presented at the Théâtre-libre and the year following "Amoureuse", one of his greatest plays, in fact, a masterpiece of modern French play-writing, Professor Samuel M. Waxman asserts. This play went directly to the Odéon in April, 1891. This piece is so natural, has such an easy-flowing dialogue, with characters so real, and yet a plot so slight. It is the story of a ménage à trois, the wife, Germaine, and her husband, Etienne, and her lover, Pascal. One may not like the subject nor Porto-Riche's treatment of it, but the author himself says, "This is life and what is sincere and natural is right."<sup>1</sup> Etienne and Germaine feel they have made a mistake in marrying, at least Etienne does, so he leaves for Italy telling the friend Pascal, "Take her, you adore her, console her. I give her to you." On Etienne's return, he finds them together and he demands that his wife leave his home. As she goes, however, he bars the way, "Where are you going?" "That is no concern of yours." "You are not going to him are

1. Clark, Barrett, "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 47.



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you?" She, "Your jealousy comes a trifle late!" In the end they are reconciled. It was Germaine's great love that kept them together though it caused her much pain. In this character, and with Thérèse in "Le Vieil Homme", are women, "who love the deepest and suffer the most, yet somehow the poet makes us feel that these are just the ones who live the best lives."<sup>1</sup> There is no question of moral right or wrong with Porto-Riche. He little cares to discuss the question. He also wrote "Le Passé" 1898, "Le Vieil Homme" 1911 and many others. In 1918, appeared "Le Marchand d'Estampes", a play of very simple plot yet full of strength and character portrayal. Fanny, the wife of Daniel, is an excellently drawn character all through her struggle against the love of Daniel, her sick husband, for another woman, Marraine. The end of this play is very dramatic. Fanny pleads so well and so realistically with Daniel. Neither of them can conquer this devotion of Daniel and they take the only course which they see clearly--Daniel throws himself into the Seine after Fanny. Porto-Riche surely is an author most representative of the Théâtre-libre. M. Lanson in "Histoire de la Littérature française", says of Porto-Riche, "M. de Porto-Riche est le peintre de l'amour, de ses fièvres, de ses fougues, de ses souffrances. Il en exprime l'éternelle essence dans une note très curieusement moderne."<sup>2</sup>

HENRY BATAILLE born in 1872 at Nimes, is the next dramatist to consider. He, too, according to F. W. Chandler is

1. Clark, Barrett H., "Contemporary French Dramatists", p. 50.
2. Lanson, Gustave, "Histoire de la Littérature française", p. 1124.



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a laureate of love. Bataille seems to be a specialist in the pathology of love. He likes to explore hearts that are consumed by passion and utterly devoid of will. His feminine roles are never sane, well-balanced women. Bataille himself is a sensitive, very highly impressionable, poetical sort of man who seems to shed over his work a softness and a melancholy. He is rarely a satirist. Bataille studied art for a while and reveals in his first plays that he is more interested in the stage settings and the mounting, the frame as it were, then he is in the plot itself. Bataille's later works show that he is a great dramatist. He is like a child in his vivacity, candor and "virginité de sensibilité". He feels intensely sound, form and color, because of his artistic training no doubt. Victor Basch says of Bataille's talent, "Son talent est à la fois simple et complexe, direct et contourné, spontané et subtil."<sup>1</sup> He is like the romantics in his search for exceptional situations and feelings. Bataille aims to give a "slice of life", enlarge upon it and make it symbolic of all men. Sometimes this puts too great a load on his characters. Victor Basch writes after seeing Bataille's play "Poliche", "Il m'a semblé que les personnages dans lesquels il a incarné la passion étaient incapables de la porter: Il m'a été impossible quelque effort que j'aie fait de m'identifier avec les personnages, de m'infuser en eux et de sentir leurs douleurs comme si c'étaient mes douleurs propres." There is a similarity in plot through many of Bataille's plays. "Ton Sang", one of his earlier

1. Basch, Victor, "Etudes d'esthétique dramatique", p. 84.



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pieces first showed his dramatic ability. Two brothers are suitors of a blind girl. The elder is assertive, the younger a dreamer. The girl has already yielded to the elder, unknown to the dreamer. But when the younger is ill and nearly dying she gives him some of her blood. She then consents to be his wife. The elder raves and rages at her, thus letting the younger brother know their past relations. The younger one then tears off the bandages, unwilling to have Martha's blood save him.

In "Maman Colibri" 1903, a woman Irène is in love with her son's friend. This son suspecting the truth gives her a kiss she thinks is from her friend, and so he finds out the truth. Her husband bids her give up this infatuation or leave his house.

She and her lover go to Algiers where he soon deserts her for someone else. Irène goes home to her son, now married, and spends her days in caring for her grandchild. Irène's husband says "Woman is not a free and independent being like us; she is subject to laws of nature that no civilization has ever

abolished or ever can."<sup>1</sup> Bataille's "La Marche Nuptiale" 1905 is more pessimistic. Here Grace de Plessans, brought up in a convent, eventually marries, against her family's will, a dull musician. They suffer from lack of money in Paris and Grace seeks help from a schoolmate whose husband pursues Grace much to her disgust. Grace and Claude try to be happy--he has given her a piano on which they play "La Marche Nuptiale". Through all the struggle Grace tries to keep up her standard of living but she soon finds that Claude has stolen to give her the piano,

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 107.



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that she is to have a child, and that her friend is jealous of her. She cannot bear all these things at once, so she takes her own life.

In "Poliche", a country fellow is in love with a widow who spends some happy time with him at Fountainbleau. Rosine soon returns to a former lover however, leaving Poliche to his former humdrum life. "La femme nue", written in 1908, is about an artist having won a prize for his painting "La femme nue" and in his rejoicing he asks the model to marry him. His head is turned by success and he, through the help of a wealthy Jewess, struggles for a career. Little Loulou pleads with the Jewess's husband to separate them, but all he cares about is the money his wife will give him. Loulou herself pleads with Pierre and the Jewess. Pierre's suggestion is that he divide his time between the women! Loulou, thanks to Bataille, finds some consolation in a former friend, another artist. Others of his plays are "Le Scandale", "La Vierge folle", "Le Songe d'un soir d'amour", "L'Enfant de l'amour", "Les Flambeaux", "Le Phalène" and "L'Amazone" which written in 1916 has a war setting. This play, according to Victor Basch, is one of the most beautiful and deepest of the war pieces. This play shows Bataille's interest in people as a group rather than in the individual. Ginette banished from her home by the German invasion, seeks refuge with her cousin, Cecile. There she gives her time to helping the wounded, always preaching the glory of war. Cecile's husband, a civil engineer, had helped in his way, but through



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Ginette's continual talking and his growing love for her, he goes to the front lines where he is killed. Cecile never forgives Ginette who, because of this, gives up marrying Pierre and returns home to give her life to the service of the wounded. There is a real, deep, noble patriotism throughout this piece. Several of Bataille's plays have been translated and played here in the United States, but the presentations have not been successful in this country. Americans apparently do not care for Bataille's Plays.

MAURICE DONNAY, born in 1860 at Paris, is the third of these dramatists writing mainly of love. After vainly trying to earn a living as a civil engineer, he began to write plays. He started out by writing short satires for the Chat-Noir, a Montmartre cabaret. His plays may lack depth, but they are remarkable for their brilliant wit, the clear, concise style with its natural conversations and extremely clever portraiture. His plays deal almost exclusively with love. He is not morbidly interested in love and passion but he accepts love as a relief from ennui. Chandler says, "Donnay, indeed, is sufficiently an ironist to laugh when his characters depart from the norm, and his wit and light cynicism save them and him from becoming<sup>1</sup> absurd." "Amants" 1893, is one of his best plays. A retired actress is giving a party for her own daughter. It is soon evident that the mothers of all these little guests are unmarried like Claudine herself. Claudine has an accepted lover, the Count de Ruyseux, father of Claudine's child. Meanwhile,

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 95.



38  
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another man, Georges Vêtheuil, wishes to be her lover too, and does become so after the Count goes to Naples for a while. Eventually these two, Claudine and Georges, part in Italy.

Claudine - "Then--this is the end--of everything?"

Vêtheuil - "Listen, Claudine, let me tell you, let me--

Claudine - "What can you say to me? Something reasonable again? Don't you feel anything?"

Vêtheuil - "Claudine, that's not kind--If you only knew! I'm all broken up too; I have a steep calvary as well as you, but I say this must be, it must!"

Claudine - "Then I'll never see you again!"

Vêtheuil - "Of course you will--I'll come back, later, after we're both cured.

Claudine - "Do you believe we shall be?"

Vêtheuil - "Yes, we shall, I'm not leaving you because you deceived me, and you're not leaving me for the same reason; nor are we tired of each other. There are none of the conventional lies between us, nor the usual infamous tricks to envenom our love and wound us incurably: we are breaking off because you have your daughter and your friend, and we cannot be happy with those obstacles to overcome. We are saying good-by,<sup>1</sup> but in what a marvelously beautiful land!"

Vêtheuil leaves, but eighteen months later they meet at a reception in Paris. They find only quiet affection for each

1. Donnay, Maurice, "Les Amants", Acte IV, Scène 1.



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other now. Vêtheuil is to marry the sister of one of his friends, while Claudine is to go to the country with the Count, since the Countess has run away with an officer. Marriage fidelity is not of prime importance to Donnay. He uses it or infidelity, simply to be able to portray better his characters. Donnay's attitude toward adultery as a "social necessity" is most typical of all his plays. Marriage, fidelity and love are his three subjects and love his favorite one. In "George Lemeunier" 1898, Donnay tries to be a moralist. The wealthy inventor George falls for an adventuress in league with her husband. George's model wife leaves him to return to her mother but George soon repents and all is well. Donnay carefully puts in a subplot, the usual one of husband and wife deceiving each other. Madame Mairieux secretly meets a young man whose friend meets in secret Monsieur Mairieux. In "Le Torrent" is tragedy as Donnay can well portray it. A Parisian retires to the country where he is bored by his wife and everybody and everything around him. He finally falls in love with a neighbor, Madame Lambert, whose husband is always absorbed in his work. Madame Lambert refuses because of her conscience, to have her husband assume the paternity of her child so in spite of the advice of her priest, she can see only suicide as a way out and throws herself into a torrent. Others of his plays are "L'Education de Prince" 1900, "L'Autre Danger", 1902, in which a mother loves a young man Freydieres, only to find that later her own daughter also loves him. Claire gives him up to let



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her daughter, Madeleine, have him. She says she should have seen what would happen but "one never thinks of that other danger."

The incompatibility of races is shown in his "Le Retour de Jérusalem", where a husband, tired of his wife, becomes the lover of a Jewess tired of her husband. They eventually separate because they find even their free union too confining. His theory of the incompatibility of the classes is shown in "Oiseaux de passage" 1904, where a bourgeois Julien marries a Russian savante, who had been a Nihilist. They eventually separate and each one marries a person of his own class and ideas. "Les Eclaireuses" 1913, "La Patronne" 1908, and "Le Ménage de Molière" 1912, are all excellent. Donnay wrote some plays in collaboration with other authors for example, "Le Marriage de Télémaque" 1910 with Jules Lemaitre and "La belle Angevine" 1922 with André Rivoire. "Donnay has painted a remarkable gallery of portraits," says Chandler. M. Lanson writes, "M. Donnay est un ironiste qui de la fantaisie aristophanesque est passé à l'étude des formes des plus modernes de l'amour et de l'âme féminine. Il a beaucoup d'esprit, un dialogue vif et charmant, une fantaisie amusante avec un arrière-goût d'âcreté, une psychologie subtile et imprévue, avec des trouvailles d'une justesse qui saisit, un dédain content de s'étaler des artifices scéniques et de toute la vieille technique."<sup>2</sup>

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 106.
2. Lanson, Gustave, "Histoire de la Littérature française", p. 1125.



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These next two dramatists are the most important of the Symbolist Group.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK, 1862, should not be omitted here though he was born in Ghent. He went to Paris in 1886, however, to study law and there became intimate with Mallarmé and the Symbolistic group. He was recalled to Belgium by his father's death and there began to write short, imaginative, symbolistic, tragedies, very melancholy, full of imagery, with almost no action, yet creating a very definite mood in the reader rather than any definite impression. Maeterlinck's imagination is fanciful yet compact. His plays depict people clad in mysticism. His scenes take the reader or audience away from actuality to a realm of fancy and imagination. He has written many plays. "La Princesse Maleine" was his first piece, 1889. "L'intruse", "Les Aveugles", "Les Sept Princesses" followed, all symbolic dramas of one act each. "Pelleas et Melisande" followed, a longer play based on the legend of Francesca da Rimini. In 1908 appeared his "L'Oiseau Bleu", very definitely symbolic yet airy and charming. Mytyl and Tytyl, the two poor peasant children, dream of happiness symbolized by the Blue Bird. The children are dowered by the fairy Queen Berylune with a magic diamond that annuls time and space. With the help of this diamond the children go through the Kingdoms of memory, Night and the Future with as companions, Fire, Bread, Milk, Sugar, Light, a cat and a dog. Always the Blue Bird is just out of their reach. After they have gone home, Tytyl gives his pet dove to a little sick



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they have gone home, Tytyl gives his pet dove to a little sick



neighbor. The bird turns blue! There is his happiness doing a generous act. The Blue Bird flies away to show that happiness cannot be kept by only one act of generosity or kindness. Maeterlinck's play "Zozzelle" is a "Dreamy adaptation of Shakespeare's Tempest." "Marie-Magdeleine" is one of the most effective of modern Biblical dramas. The Magdalen would save Jesus from the cross by giving herself to a Roman Tribune. She realizes, however, that if she did, all Christ stood for and loved would be dead. "Le Bourgmestre de Stilmonde" written in 1918, is inspired by the Great War. During the Teuton invasion of Belgium, the bourgmestre is held hostage. One of the Germans is shot from ambush. Because the bourgmestre's servant was near he is guilty, say the Germans. He is to die, but the bourgmestre insists upon taking the place of his innocent servant. The officer who is to kill him happens to be his own son-in-law, a young German whom he had had in his home as a student. In vain the youth pleads with his father-in-law not to act as substitute. Since he refuses, the only concession granted by the superior German officer is that the son-in-law shall not have to be in the firing squad! The bourgmestre is a superb figure and shows Maeterlinck's fine ability. His style is simple yet forceful throughout. Antoine never produced one of Maeterlinck's plays because, though he admired the symbolism, he was never quite sure of it.

PAUL CLAUDEL, born at Villeneuve-sur-Fère in 1868, is an extremely capable man, being a fine writer as well as a very



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PAUL GAUBERT, born at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne in 1868, is  
an extremely capable man, being a fine writer as well as a very



able politician. He is in the French consular service and is the Ambassador now to the United States. He is one of the Symbolist group too--and his work is full of imagery and melody. A strong mysticism pervades his work and often his compactness of style and his lack of precision in detail make his work difficult to understand. "His allegorical plays are medieval in spirit and mystic in appeal." Claudel is one of the great lyric writers of these days. His work shows a truth of sentiment, a happy simplicity and a keen observation. He is always sure of his symbols which are expressed with great verbal beauty in a "dialogue of rhythmic magnificence". Claudel's theory is "that in renunciation and in religion lies the salvation of man."<sup>1</sup> Probably the best known of his plays are "L'Otage" 1911, and "L'Annonce faite à Marie" 1912. In the first is a woman's sacrifice of all she holds dear for the sake of duty. Sygne de Coüfontaine orphaned by the French Revolution, has sought refuge in an abbey whose monks have been killed. Her cousin George comes there asking her to hide Napoleon's hostage, Pope Pius VII, who is escaping from the conqueror. Sygne promises protection. To do this she, though affianced to her cousin, is told by the villain who killed her parents, that she must marry him to prevent his disclosing the hiding place. All through the play, Sygne has to do as Turelure wants and in the end, it is she who is killed by George's bullet meant for Turelure. The story is the "Crucifixion of Sygne's soul". "L'Annonce faite à Marie" has as its heroine Violaine, a pattern

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 265.



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of self-abnegation. In pity for a leprous builder of churches whom she has spurned, Violaine innocently kisses him. So she too becomes leprous, and must give her fiancé to her sister, Mara, who is always jealous of her. As an outcast, never trying to justify her actions, she retires to a forest but where she becomes a Saint to all who know her. All look up to her. Finally Mara comes to her with her dead child over whom Violaine prays. In the miraculous reviving of life in the child, Violaine suffers strange birth throes. She notices that a new soul has been breathed into the child's body, changing even the color of the eyes. The child henceforth looks to her and Jacques, its father, as its spiritual parents. This little life to her represents the child she and Jacques might have had. Mara does not tell the father of the miracle but he learns of it from the dying Violaine, knowing thus too late, that she has always loved him. This is set in the early fifteenth century and is a beautifully written play.

EDMOND ROSTAND has a place of his own on the Modern French stage, because though a playwright, he is essentially a poet. Rostand was born at Marseilles in 1868 and died in 1918. He studied for the law giving it up soon in favor of the drama. Personally, he was a nervous, retiring hyper-sensitive man. Rostand has done some remarkable work. He seemed to have a talent for selecting tense dramatic situations and fine climaxes. He handled with equal deftness passages of historical description, emotional love scenes, passages of adroit exchange of wit,



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and scenes of tender pathos. His style is rich in imagery and because Rostand is a born poet, his work is lyric and melodious in quality. Some of his plays are written in verse. Rostand probably the best of any contemporary author represents the lyric romanticism of the French Theatre. F. W. Chandler says, "Fastidious in taste, sparkling in wit, fluent and musical in his verse, Rostand as poet and orator carried the day."<sup>1</sup> His first two plays "Les Deux Pierrots" and "Les Romanesques" were very successful. "La Princesse Lointaine" did not have a new plot. Joffroy Rudel, a troubadour from Aquitania, loves the Princess of Tripoli whom he has never seen. To him she represents the ideal he must always seek. He travels in a pirate ship and reaches her only when too ill to leave the ship. His friend Bertrand offers to seek the Princess for him. The Princess falls in love with Bertrand, who, after some wanderings astray, brings the Princess to Rudel who dies happily in her arms. The Princess promises to be true to him always and Bertrand goes on a crusade. In the year 1897, two entirely different kinds of works appear from Rostand's pen. "La Samaritaine" a biblical piece, and his jolly "Cyrano de Bergerac". "La Samaritaine" is a series of tableaux in Alexandrines. These tableaux give many of the sayings of Christ, and the story of the woman of Samaria being converted at the well, going back to tell her countrymen and so on. The disciples object that Jesus should have chosen her for a messenger and the priests and soldiers resent following a courtesan. However Photine conquers and leads the ill in

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 314.



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mind and body to Christ. The play ends with the Lord's Prayer. For Cyrano, Rostand found his hero ready-made in the seventeenth century, a soldier and writer born in 1619 at Paris. He was a valorous soul who set Paris laughing by all his pranks. Rostand drew some ideas for the plot from a farce called "Roquelaure, ou l'homme le plus laid de France". No one could forget Cyrano's big nose! Rostand made of this man with the "bizarre nose and noble spirit" a character that was gentle to the weak, tender to the fair, and self-effacing in love. It is Cyrano's character that makes the play. And this play has made Rostand famous. Cyrano loves his cousin Roxane but she cannot love him because of his nose. So he consents to help his rival Christian win her. Cyrano speaks the pretty speeches and writes the letters that finally win her. Christian is killed in war and for fourteen years Cyrano watches over Roxane and only as he is dying does Roxane guess his love for her. The story is very simple, but the wit, lyric quality and rapidity of action make the play. Cyrano was such a great success, probably because the public was tired of so much psychology and so many plays dealing with sex. The play really blends and prolongs three centuries of "comic fancy and moral grace." M. Lanson says of Cyrano de Bergerac; "et ce qu'il y avait de facile et claire abondance, de gaieté jeune de poésie à la portée de tout le monde, dans cette pièce romantique, a séduit le public jusqu'à un degré incroyable. Cyrano est le plus grand succès du Théâtre contemporain."<sup>1</sup> "L'Aiglon" is the story of the Duc de

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Reichstadt, the eaglet, Napoleon's son, torn between being his father's son to lead troops to victory, and his mother's son, one of the decadent house of Austria. The currents are too strong for the "little eaglet". In 1910, "Chantecler" was published--in this, beasts and birds take the place of men. Objects of the forest and farmyard are enlarged to give the illusion of the world seen through the eyes of domestic fowls. This gave Rostand his opportunity to satirize contemporary society in romantic guise. Chandler says of this play, "No analysis can convey an adequate impression of the scintillating wit, the brilliant extemporization the profusion of words and images that make us dizzy in this play. Rostand is a dervish of a poet, intoxicating by his virtuosity, now superbly lyrical, and now setting off verbal fireworks, slang, argot, puns in sheer exuberance of spirit. The characterization of the animals is apt and delightful."<sup>1</sup>

These following dramatists, while perhaps not as important as some already discussed, are writing interesting plays. Their works have a farcical quality, sometimes with satire hidden beneath the comedy.

GEORGES ANCEY (G. Mathiron de Curnieu) who was born in 1860 and died in 1917 must be mentioned for his extremely cynical, bitterly satirical plays. He was most pessimistic in his plays which are written in a precise forceful style. One of his first plays, "L'Ecole des veufs" 1889, might be said to belong to the class of "rosserie" plays. According to Augustin

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Filon, *rosserie* represents a state of mind of people who have never had any moral sense. In "L'Ecole des veufs" a senile father whose wife has just died, takes a very young mistress into his house. The first act is merely a parody of a funeral. The son becomes infatuated with the young girl and she becomes his mistress too. The old father is so infatuated, he doesn't care as long as he can have her too. Filon calls this play a brilliant example of the modern "esprit Gaulois" and it follows the tradition of the mediaeval fabliau and Molièresque farce. Ancey also wrote "L'Avenir" in 1899 and in 1901, "Ces Messieurs". "La Dupe" was produced for the first time in 1891 at the Théâtre-libre. It is the story of a young daughter, Adèle, forced into a marriage with Albert, whom the wealthy mother thought would be a good business proposition. Marie, the other daughter, is always agreeing first with the mother, then with Adèle. Albert turns out to be a worthless fellow--always begging money for his mistress, Caroline. Adèle, the Dupe, gives him her dowry, and gets her mother to loan him money. In the end, Adèle and Albert are separated, Adèle still loving Albert in spite of all his vices. The mother, Madame Viot, blames the loss of her money and all Adèle's misfortunes on Adèle, when it was she herself who forced Adèle into the marriage.

Adèle - "Mama, mama, are you blaming me for all that's happened? I can't say a thing now, it seems, without your flying into a rage! It's dreadful."

Mme Viot - "It's more dreadful to be drained of your money, the way I've been!"



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 forced into a marriage with Albert, whom the wealthy mother  
 thought would be a good business proposition. Marie, the other  
 daughter, is always agreeing first with the mother, then with  
 Adèle. Albert turns out to be a worthless fellow--always begging  
 money for his mistress, Caroline. Adèle, the Duce, gives him  
 her dowry, and gets her mother to loan him money. In the end,  
 Adèle and Albert are separated, Adèle still loving Albert in  
 spite of all his vices. The mother, Madame Viot, blames the  
 loss of her money and all Adèle's misfortune on Adèle, when it  
 was she herself who forced Adèle into the marriage.  
 Adèle - "Mama, mama, are you blaming me for all that's  
 happened? I can't say a thing now, it seems,  
 without your flying into a rage! It's dreadful."  
 Mme Viot - "It's more dreadful to be drained of your money,  
 the way I've been!"



Adèle - "Is that my fault?"

Mme Viot - "Perhaps it's mine? I advise you to complain.

I've had a fine time between you and that husband of yours! A fine specimen you brought into the family!"

Adèle - "Who picked him out for me?"

Mme Viot - "You should have resisted, or else managed to get along better with him instead of always taking his part against me!"<sup>1</sup>

With Ancey, one finds a new tendency among some of the later writers like Julien and Hennrique to put little more romance into their pessimistic, naturalistic works. They seem to try a little more to please their audiences.

GEORGES COURTELINE whose real name is Georges Moinaux, was born at Tours in 1861. He produced his first plays at the Théâtre-libre. His plays are farces and light comedies which show beneath the surface a keen observation and a penetrating psychology. His farces move with a fast pace, twisting and turning until the tangle provokes the audience to laughter. He and Tristan Bernard know all the tricks of comedy, such as confused identities, folding chairs, trunks, etc. Courteline develops character only to motivate his plots which are very whimsical. Many of his subjects are military, perhaps due to the fact that he ran away from college and so his father punished him by putting him in the army. "Un Client Sérieux" 1896, tells of a Café proprietor who sues a client who made

1. Ancey, Georges, "The Dupe", Acte V, p. 248.



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seven different drinks out of one order of café + cognac. The lawyer defends him as a saving person, but when the lawyer is made a magistrate during the trial, he accuses the defendant of being a drunkard because his seven drinks a day make 2,555 a year or 2,562 in leap year. However, the client is acquitted because his pride suffered when he was thrown out of the café! "L'Article 330" pokes fun at all the red tape of the government. A bourgeois, a worthy person, complains that people on the moving sidewalk of the Paris Exposition annoy him by throwing things at his windows--his house being very near. His complaint is passed from one to another, the Society of Electrical Transportation, then the commission of the exposition, then the Council of Paris. He vows to take revenge, so turning his back on the moving sidewalk, he proceeds to undress. Of course, crowds accumulate, complaints pour in by the thousands and the poor citizen is hurried off to jail. Some of his army subjects are "Gaîtés de l'escadron", "Le Gendarme est sans pitié", and "Le Commissaire est bon enfant".

PIERRE WOLFF was born in Paris in 1865. He is one of the comedy writers who started writing under the influence of the comédie rosse of the Théâtre-libre. His plays are very well constructed though they lack originality. "Supple and pliant in talent," comments Chandler, "he understands to a nicety the art of playmaking."<sup>1</sup> "His dialogue is bright and clear, by turns tender or ironic, his pieces are marked by skill in the progress of their action and by their use of contrasts."<sup>2</sup> Defiance of

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convention and faith in love seems to be his creed. His plays stir a genuine emotion in the audience. He covers his *rosserie* of the earlier years with "sugar", a sort of sentimental tenderness which makes us weep for his underworld heroines. His work is very clever and witty. As for his plays, the plots are never original, for example in "Celles qu'on respecte", the married couple have separated, the husband having given his wife to a friend who soon tires of her so she must go back to her husband. "Leurs Filles" is to prove that daughters of harlots will follow the profession of their mothers in spite of convent training. "Le Secret de Polichinelle", according to the story, made all Paris weep because of the devotion of the young man of good family to a little florist for whom he refuses a fine marriage and braves the anger of his family. "Les Marionnettes" has a very old plot, that of a husband who neglects his wife; but at once comes back to her when she arouses his jealousy. In "L'Amour défendu", the husband whose wife loves another, a friend of his, goes away on a trip, giving his wife to his friend. The husband thinks thus to cure her love. It works just the opposite however, and the husband upon returning, finding them still in love resolves to disappear for good!

TRISTAN BERNARD was born in 1866 at Besançon. He is a very fertile writer of ingenious plays showing freshness of invention, an inexhaustible fund of good humor. Sometimes he introduced a cynical, ironical rather fatalistic attitude of resignation into his work and this only heightens the comical

*Madame Dorel.*

*See, Victor, "Études d'esthétique dramatique", p. 141.*



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effect. Bernard has an eye for realistic detail and a power of revealing character in a single stroke. His plays are realistic and of simple intrigue--well-written in an "easy, graceful, well-proportioned style." Bernard is the deepest of our humorists. "He knows how to create beings", says Victor Basch in "Etudes d'esthétique dramatique", "who through everything queer<sup>1</sup> and funny remain saturated with deep psychological truth." Many of the titles of Bernard's plays state the nature of their themes--for example "L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle", has to do with an adventurer who for one day assumes the place of an interpreter in a hotel--he knows no language but his own French! In "Le Seul Bandit au village", a jealous husband takes a thief for his wife's lover. In "La Bande à Léon", a husband accompanies a police officer to investigate a den of thieves, as they suppose. When they get there the husband finds his wife with her lover. In "Les Visiteurs Nocturnes", the heroine, a sufferer from insomnia, is drugged and robbed by thieves. She is so grateful for the sleep they have given her, that she pursues them only to get the recipe of the opiate they used. In "La Mariée du Touring Club", Bernard uses an automobile to help build his plot, adds a mock marriage. The efforts of the hoodwinked bridegroom to claim his bride add much to the enjoyment of the piece. In the "Flirt Ambulant", Madame Dumorel says she is ready for everything--

"When shall we start" asks Dumorel?

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"When shall we start?" asks Dumorel?

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"Monday then?"

"Impossible, that is the day for the laundry!"

"Tuesday?"

"I have a fitting."

"Wednesday?"

"I must pay a call."

"On Thursday we cannot go," says sly Dumorel.

"And why not," says Madame, "we will go on Thursday."

Bernard himself says, "I never ask myself whether what I compose will be tragic or comic; I merely treat my subject."<sup>1</sup>

He is best however at comedy. "Le Petit Café" surely will be long remembered. A café owner learning that his one waiter is likely to inherit a fortune, pledges him to serve for twenty years or forfeit 200,000 francs if he breaks the contract. Of course the waiter wants to break it when he does receive the money. The owner refuses and the waiter pretends to be insane to secure release being, meanwhile, sane before witnesses to prevent his being sent to an insane asylum. He finds no way out except playing the gentleman after hours. Then he gets into all kinds of trouble. After he is arrested, he returns to the café resigned both to serving there and marrying his master's daughter.

FRANCIS DE CROISSET who was born at Brussels in 1877 should be mentioned. He is the author of plays in both prose and verse which are extremely optimistic in tone and possess great charm and delicacy. In him is noticed the tendency to

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 171.



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get away from the gloomy pessimism. "Chérubin", 1901, is the story of a gay page of Beaumarchais who ogles every woman he meets, finally resulting in a duel. The lady gets the fine gentleman to refrain from the duel, and the page finds that love conquers even honor, so he decides to concentrate on one lady, a dancer. Croisset wrote "Le Paon" 1904, "Le Bonheur", "Mesdames" 1905, and "Le Feu du voisin" 1910. The heroine for ten years has allowed her admirer to kiss only her finger tips. It took an Englishman to awaken her love but he went to others. There still was the faithful lover whom she found she adored. "You were asleep", he told her, "It was necessary that someone arouse you. Without him you would never have loved me." One of De Croisset's later plays shows how the war influenced some of the writers, "D'un jour à l'autre" 1917. A woman is about to divorce her Don Juan when the war comes. Don Juan fights bravely and comes home on furlough to find his wife, Marthe, courted by two men, one a profiteer representing the corruption that breeds upon war, the other a hero representing the new war-engendered austerity. Don Juan realizes his little worth in comparison to the hero, so he gives Marthe to him.

SACHA GUITRY, born in 1885, is both author and actor. He is distinctly a lyric poet. His art is "monocorde", full of lyric poetry which enlarges and deepens his light sketches. He writes with himself as hero and then plays the parts himself, so there is a sameness in his heroes. However, he is an important figure in the theatre world of France. He is a very



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fertile and versatile author of vivacious comedies which are remarkable for their cynical observation, sparkling dialogue and variety and originality of theme. Guitry can skillfully gloss over moral ugliness and make it harmless and even picturesque. In "La Clef" 1907, a musician is content to let his flirtation with a lady force her husband to divorce her. Then he will marry her though neither really want marriage, but the lady must have a husband to deceive. Some of Guitry's plays are "Un Beau Mariage" 1911, "Le Veilleur de nuit" 1911, "Jean III" 1912, "La Prise de Berg-op-Zoom" 1912. Guitry has also written some successful biographical dramas: "Jean de la Fontaine" 1916, "Deburau" 1918, "Pasteur" 1917, which ends "Why are you sad?" asks one of the characters. "Because I am disgusted with life." "But you will be happy." "Yes, that is what disgusts me."

#### Influences of the World War on the Modern French Drama

As a result of a war there is always a drop in the production of literature though people will turn to the stage somewhat, for relaxation. After a war it is another proposition. The World War was a long one for France and many of the theatre's chief contributors have ceased writing. Others have done nothing worth mentioning since the war. During the war the theatre managers had to resort to plays really patriotic, or to the masterpieces both old and new. People did not want new frivolous material presented to them. M. Bloch says in "Le Destin du Théâtre", that society is sick, that after the war we have only weak plays given us, comédies de mœurs, a few are



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comédies de caractère. The twentieth century literature of the after-the-war period is born under world wars, fears of revolutions, international congresses, alliances for or against something or some nation. There is a feeling of unrest. There are the comédies de mœurs like the pamphlets, "Théâtraux Veau Gras" by Bernard, "Zimmer", and "Topaze" by Pagnol. After the war we find an "Esprit Nouveau" in the literature. "Le romantique ennemi du sentimentalism de la romance, des rêves gentils, et douceâtres, des évasions en toc, des petites voluptés sournoises et de l'épargne bourgeoise."<sup>1</sup> Among the authors writing war plays are Lucien Boyer ("La nouvelle Revue Antiboche"), Dominique Bernard ("Les Huns et les Autres"), Sacha Guitry ("Il faut l'avoir"), Maurice Hennique and Pierre Véber ("Le Poilu", a comédie opérétte), Victor Darlay and Henry de Gorsse ("Les Exploits d'une petite Française"), Paul Géraudy ("Guerre, Madame"), Pierre Wolff ("Les Deux Gloires"), Marcelle Girelle ("Passe-Montagne"), André Calmettes (La Prière dans la nuit), Pierre Frondaie ("Colette Baudoché"), François Porché ("Les Butors et la Finette") one of the most original dramas induced by the war. Les Butors are the Teutonic barbarians who have intrenched themselves in the country of the young queen La Finette or France. They abuse her generosity, scoff at her art and science, her love of joy and her taste in everything. They deem it their duty to put there, their own Kultur. Too late Finette perceives it all, even to the treachery of her trusted steward. Just as everything seems in favor of the

1. Bloch, M., "Le Destin du Théâtre", p. 78.



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Butors, the queen's forces turn and all ends well. The great men of the theatre are producing nothing of importance--for example, Lavedan's "Dialogue de Guerre" is simply twenty little scenes strung together. Perhaps he is influenced by the Drame Historique which seems to be a new style very recently. M. Bloch says, "Ce drame historique ne consiste plus en reconstitutions véristes. Il laisse de côté le bric-à-brac gothique. Il cherche à éclairer le pathétique des grands heurts de l'histoire par la psychologie profonde du héros et pas la connaissance aiguë l'expérience désenchantée de la psychologie des foules,--legs d'un siècle de démocratie."<sup>1</sup> Again he says, "Ces ouvrages empruntent au désordre et à la corruption d'après-guerre, au heurt de la nouvelle et de l'ancienne France, une virulence particulière."<sup>2</sup> Since none of the great dramatists are writing much, the French theatre is waiting and must wait for talent still unknown.

Henry Bataille says that war, a creature created by man, had surpassed his creator and now is causing an intellectual apathy. After the war is the struggle. The second misery is worse than war itself because hate that has been installed by war will not go, it remains in other forms. As Bataille says we have the struggle of the races, internal war of religious and free thought, of militarism and socialism, of old currents and new, revolts, so much material suffering, and a new despot money, His majesty, the Dollar, and the royal consort, "The

1. Bloch, M., "Le Destin du Théâtre", p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 97.



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Debt". All this makes a "formidable regression of humanity". And only Justice, Right and Love will conquer them. The theatre will live through it but art will have a hard enemy to conquer, La mentalité nouvelle du public.

Chandler says, "On the lap of the Gods therefore lies the future."<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century Naturalism held sway over a part of the prose literature of France, though it was on the wane. The aims and purposes of the Naturalists have been noted above under the theatre. They wanted "to replace observation rather than imagination, to emphasize facts rather than truth, to emphasize that the business of art is the exact reproduction of actuality." The Naturalist used science as an aid to his art. "Science de 1830 à 1900", according to Bernard Fay in "Panorama de la littérature française", has been a benigne en France. Elle enrichit beaucoup de gens et a'en fait guère.<sup>2</sup> Everyone benefited because of this reign of science—especially the "petite-bourgeoisie" class which, hard-working and well-informed, had come out of the second Empire into the Third Republic as the leading power politically. Zola was the great leader of the Naturalists. Zola says, "Aujourd'hui le roman est devenu l'outil de science, la grande enquête sur l'homme et sur la nature."<sup>3</sup> Zola's definition of a novel was "a corner of nature seen through a temperament." Every novel was to be a scientific experiment. Often the novels written by these authors were social or documentary usually written

1. Chandler, Frank W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 341.

2. Bernard Fay, "Panorama de la littérature contemporaine", p. 22.

3. Zola, "Roman expérimental", p. 331.



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## THE NOVEL

### General Characteristics and Influences which led to the Present-Day Novel

#### THE NATURALIST SCHOOL

At the beginning of the twentieth century Naturalism held sway over a part of the prose literature of France, though it was on the wane. The aims and purposes of the Naturalists have been noted above under the theatre. They wanted "to emphasize observation rather than imagination, to emphasize facts rather than truth, to emphasize that the business of art is the exact reproduction of actuality."<sup>1</sup> The Naturalist used science as an aid to his art. "Science de 1830 à 1900", according to Bernard Fay in "Panorama de la littérature française", fut bonne et bénigne en France. Elle enrichit beaucoup de gens et n'en tua guère."<sup>2</sup> Everyone benefited because of this reign of science--especially the "petite-bourgeoisie" class which, hard-working and well-informed, had come out of the second Empire into the third Republic as the leading power politically. Zola was the great leader of the Naturalists. Zola says, "Aujourd'hui le roman est devenu l'outil du siècle, la grande enquête sur l'homme et sur la nature."<sup>3</sup> Zola's definition of a novel was "a corner of nature seen through a temperament." Every novel was to be a scientific experiment. Often the novels written by these authors were social or documentary usually written

1. Chandler, F.W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 51.
2. Fay, Bernard, "Panorama de la littérature contemporaine", p. 89.
3. Zola, "Romanciers Naturalists", p. 331.



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1. Chandler, F.W., "The Contemporary Drama of France", p. 51.
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in a severe and exact style. All this gave a distorted picture of France because although the Naturalists tried to paint life as they saw it, too often they saw only the sordid, gloomy side of life. M. Bernard Fay in "Panorama de la littérature Contemporaine" comments, "A l'étranger le Naturalisme fixa une image crue, parfois désobligeante de notre pays. On se plaisait à admirer nos vices et notre génie. La littérature française jusqu' alors la plus hiérarchisée du monde, paraissait en train de s'ouvrir à tous, de se mettre à la portée de tous et de renoncer à ses anciennes idées de règle de style, de décence, de politesse compliquée et de psychologie subtile."<sup>(1)</sup> In "French literature during the last half century" is this comment of Zola's books. "In Zola's books we find such a collection of degenerates that we are unwilling to admit that his "milieu" is true to life. Insanity, drunkenness, idiocy, murder, theft, arson, rape, adultery, illegitimacy exist in this world and the novelist may mention them, even discuss them at length, when the occasion requires it, but they are not the norm of life and a family in which such happenings are common, is no more typically French than it is typically human. In his desire not to shrink from painful facts, Zola has distorted life to the point of achieving not truth but a nightmare."<sup>(2)</sup>

#### THE SYMBOLIST SCHOOL

In 1900 there were also some traces left of the influence of the symbolist school though that principally affected the poets. Emile Bouvier in "Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui"

1. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature Contemporaine" Page 97

2. Cunliffe, John W. "French literature during the last half century"



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Ray, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature contemporaine" Page 97

E. Carrière, John W. "French literature during the last half century"



gives Littré's definition of "un symbol", as, "une figure ou une image, employée à la place d'une chose." The influence of these Symbolists as in the work of Claudel and Maeterlinck is felt in the gradual getting away from the too realistic, too gloomy Naturalists. The Symbolists put more imagery, more fantasy in their work. "L'homme se plaît à ajouter au monde créé le monde imaginaire de ses illusions, de ses mirages, de ses fantaisies."<sup>(1)</sup>

In M. Paul Bourget for example one finds the influence of both Naturalism and Symbolism. "Au Naturalisme, il a pris ce goût violent et malheureux pour le réel, qui lui semble le but suprême de l'art, mais il a été assez judicieux pour discerner chez les Symbolistes, outre leurs réussites, qui furent réelles, leur aspiration primordiale et informe: la volupté de l'inconscient: le plaisir de s'abandonner à cette joie que ni notre esprit ni notre corps ne peuvent mesurer et qui pourtant nous domine.

Bourget présentait ainsi de sa génération une carte dont le tracé était juste et les couleurs assez vives pour frapper le regard."<sup>(2)</sup>

French prose has very gently passed from one phase to another. One is hardly conscious of a change. After 1900 or so, the Naturalist seemed to be a less powerful influence as also was Symbolism. M. Bernard Fay remarks about this fact, "on était las du Naturalisme, le culte de la science n'avait pas satisfait et le Symbolisme s'était engourdi de fatigue; pourtant une

1. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature Contemporaine" Page 115

2. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature Contemporaine" Page 117

1. Bordeaux, H. "Les Ecrivains et les Moeurs" Page 7

2. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature Contemporaine" Page 117



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L. Bourgeois, H. "Les Écrivains et les Mœurs" Page 7

M. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la littérature contemporaine" Page 17



tradition naturaliste se continuait."<sup>(1)</sup>

The Growth of Romanticism - The Naturalist school in spite of its now evident fallacies, has had and does have a great influence on writers of today. As a result of the waning of these schools, Romantisme was growing. The public was growing tired of scientifically treated novels and wanted a little more pleasure. The authors seemed to try to think more of the reader and give him a more pleasant view of life. During the years 1900-1914 life was one of material prosperity. Luxury, the progress of industry and society gave all a feeling of ease and freedom from worry. So the French authors easily adopted this feeling. Fay remarks, "Le Romantisme avait développé cette disposition en exaltant la sensibilité aux dépens de l'intelligence. Le plaisir d'agir, de raisonner de juger avait passé au second plan, supplanté par la volupté de percevoir et de se passionner."<sup>(2)</sup>

Fay defines the purpose of Romanticism as "La fusion d'une intelligence nette et subtile avec une sensibilité pleine de toutes les joies modernes, tel était son but. Dirigée par Gide, Copeau, Claudel etc., elle aspirait à ne rien ignorer de ce monde tout en maintenant la suprématie de l'Esprit."<sup>(3)</sup> With this

tendency toward Romanticism came a renewed interest in style and form, somewhat following the old Classicists, from whose exacting and definite rules the Naturalists had gone away. Le Roman

1. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine" Page 135
2. Fay, Bernard "Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine" Page 137
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du style defined by André Billy as "le Roman où domine un souci d'élégance formelle et où se font sentir des préoccupations d'art, d'archéologie et de vie en décor."<sup>(1)</sup> Emile Bouvier in

'Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui' has remarked, "Il semble qu'on puisse légitimement distinguer dans la production littéraire contemporaine deux catégories d'oeuvres également estimables mais de style différent, deux genres de beauté également indéniables, quoique irréductibles, deux écoles; les anciens et les modernes."<sup>(2)</sup> From J. de Laetelle's book

"Silbermann" comes this classic portrait: "Il s'appelle Silberman. En disant ces mots, il n'avait désigné un garçon qui se tenait à la porte de la classe, en tête des rangs, et que je ne me rappelais pas avoir vu l'année précédente dans aucune division de quatrième. Il était petit et d'extérieur chétif. Sa figure, que je vis bien, car il se retournait et parlait à ses voisins, était très formée, mais assez laide, avec des pommettes saillantes et un menton aigu. <sup>sur le jaune, les yeux et les sourcils étaient</sup> Le teint était pâle, tirant, noirs, les lèvres charmues et d'une couleur fraîche. Ses gestes étaient très vifs et captivaient l'attention. Lorsque, avec une mimique que l'on ne pouvait s'empêcher de suivre, il s'adressait à ses voisins, ses pupilles semblaient sauter sur l'un et puis sur l'autre. L'ensemble éveillait l'idée d'une précocité étrange; il me fit songer aux petits prodiges qui exécutent des tours dans les cirques. J'eus peine à détacher de lui mon regard. En classe d'anglais je fus placé à côté de Silbermann et pus l'observer à loisir. Attentif

1. Fay, Bernard "La Littérature française Contemporaine" Page 82

2. Bouvier, Emile "Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui" Page 121



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1. Rev. Bernard "La Littérature Française Contemporaine" Page 82

2. Bouvier, Emile "Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui" Page 181



à tout ce que disait le professeur, il ne le quitta pas du regard; il resta immobile, le menton en pointe, la lèvre pendante, la physionomie tendue curieusement; seule la pomme d'Adam saillant du cou maigre, bougeait par moments. Comme ce profil un peu animal était éclairé bizarrement par un rayon de soleil, il me fit penser aux lézards qui, sur la terrasse d'Aiguesbnelles, à l'heure chaude, sortent d'une fente et, la tête allongée, avec un gonflement intermittent de la gorge, surveillent la trace des humains." (1)

In contrast, is this portrait done in the modern way - portrait of Lemançon in "Juliette au pays des hommes" by Jean Géraudoux  
.....et Lemançon parut.

Si Juliette avait soupçonné de telle nomenclature précise Lemançon disposait pour nommer chaque partie de son corps, - car il avait tenu à prendre son diplôme d'anatomie pour n'en rien ignorer, - elle eût été bien confuse. Mais elle s'imaginait que ce psychologue connaissait seulement les articulations de ses désirs, les pulsations de ses indifférences, et elle en était toute fière. Dailleurs dos à la fenêtre illuminée cette fois par midi, la brise l'éventant, elle avait l'air d'un de ces génies dont Lemançon - car il avait lu le dictionnaire swedenborgien, - connaissait aussi par leur nom chaque détail; et tous les mots qui s'appliquent aux femmes, tels que gorge, soutien-gorge etc, furent revêtus soudain dans Lemançon par leurs synonymes pour êtres surnaturels. C'est ce changement subit de vocabulaire, rapide comme un changement de vitesse, que d'aucuns dénomment l'amour. L'opération par contre fut inverse en ce qui concernait Lemançon. Il portait des longnons à chaîne,



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En contrast, la tête portait donc in the modern way - portait  
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une chaîne de montre, une épingle de cravate à perle balançante, de sorte qu'à chacun de ses mouvements un fil à plomb de nacre et d'or indiquait l'axe auquel Lemañon renonçait. Les bijoux ne sont beaux et ne remplissent leur rôle que s'ils ont l'air d'être jaillis de la personne qui les porte. Ce n'était vraiment pas le cas; rien dans son sternum qui justifiât cette breloque Louis XIII. Il avait plutôt l'air d'un aimant qui s'est promené dans une orfèvrerie, et cet amas d'objets précieux sur lui, au lieu d'évoquer la richesse, appelait à la pensée de Juliette tous les objets utiles et vulgaires qui remplissaient le véritable office dans cet habillement, bretelles, jarretelles, et pince à cravate. Juliette évidemment ne s'attendait pas à ce qu'il vînt nu, ni à ce qu'il portât un peplum ou des braies, mais les vêtements de Lemañon semblaient avoir subi démesurément les opérations de la coupe. Partout et en tout sens couraient d'énormes coutures, comme sur le moulage en plâtre d'une statue. Si bien que Juliette eut, par de faux indices, l'impression de la vérité, et soupçonna que Lemañon était un faux, un moulage d'écrivain."



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Throughout this period and especially during and after the war, there is such a wide variety in the work of the contemporary French novelists and even in the work of one man. M. Fernand Baldensperger says in "L'Avant-Guerre dans la littérature française - "Les lettres françaises d'avant-guerre sont plus révélatrices des tendances profondes que si elles s'étaient appliquées à marquer d'une empreinte définie la vie ambiante. Une littérature à Thèses, des drames ou des romans construits pour persuader révèlent tout simplement l'intention des auteurs et le système auquel ils se rattachent: c'est l'accueil du public qui permet tout au plus de savoir si le même rythme profond anime l'écrivain et ses lecteurs." (1) M. Lanson gives as a reason for this variety, "Le roman est stationnaire. Il n'y a plus d'école, ce qui n'est pas un mal: chacun va à son idéal selon sa nature, par ses procédés et change parfois l'idéal ou de procédés sans des pressions extérieures, par la vertu des circonstances, plutôt que par la tendance de la nature intime." (2) He continues, "dans la multiplicité incohérente des oeuvres, plusieurs directions se laissent distinguer." (3) René Lalou in "Littérature Française Contemporaine" gives the same opinion "Toutes écoles abolies, jamais il ne justifia mieux la définition stendhalienne

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1. L'Avant-Guerre dans la littérature française 1900-1914 Page 26
2. Lanson, Gustave "Histoire de la Littérature française" Page 1118

Page 113

1. Baldensperger, Fernand "Littérature Française Contemporaine" Page 11

2. Lanson, Gustave "Histoire de la Littérature française" Page 1118

3. Lalou, René "Littérature Française Contemporaine" Page 113



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1. L'Avant-Guerre dans la littérature française 1900-1914 Page 28

2. Tchernoud, Gustave "Histoire de la littérature française" Page 1118



et nous ne chercherons point à grouper les romanciers autrement qu'en indiquant les routes où ils ont promené leur miroir et les différentes images qu'il a reflétées."<sup>(1)</sup>

Use of Psychological Study: There is the novel of analysis which André Billy in "La Littérature française contemporaine" defines as "Roman d'analyse, c'est - à - dire roman psychologique, roman d'amour, roman de caractère. C'est le roman de grande tradition française."<sup>(2)</sup> Albert Leon Guérard in "Fine Masters of French Romance" says, "A French novel like a French drama is not primarily a work of gorgeous fancy, or humour, or passion, but a psychological study reduced to its essential terms the study of a crisis."<sup>(3)</sup> The French writers do not write a book simply to be able to give delightful dégressions - that is far from their intention. They have an aim and cling to it. As for the love in the contemporary novels, one finds a tendency to get away from the sensual love shown on the stage. As Paul Adams expresses it in "La littérature et la Guerre", "Autour de l'emoi passionnel il semble que la littérature en éclosion veuille faire sentir la splendeur de l'action humaine domptant, par le courage et le génie, ces démons éternels qui reculent le seuil des paradis espérés, ces démons qui se nomment "L'Espace et le Temps."<sup>(4)</sup>

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1. Lalou, René "Histoire de la littérature française Contemporaine"

2. Billy, André "La littérature française Contemporaine" Page 73

3. Guérard, Albert Léon "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 192

4. Adams, Paul "La littérature et la Guerre" Page 113



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- 2. Billy, André "La littérature française contemporaine" Page 73
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décadence." (1) The "roman de caractère" is excellently exemplified in Sylvestre Bonnard of Anatole, France and Jean Christophe of Romain Rolland.

The Novel of Manners. The novel of manners still is evident - "le roman de l'homme en société, de l'homme soumis à toutes les influences du milieu et du climat." (2) The writers are much more interested in the vital problems of everyday life. Most of the intellectuals have at some time written on the questions of the day. The Dreyfus affair affected the literary world very considerably, the authors were divided, some for and some against, but this only helps to prove the interest of the writers in current affairs. Many of the romans de mœurs voice the author's opinions for or against a social problem. They were not a socialistic group, but rather conservatively, they aimed to give to the world their opinions. "Autour de la lutte pour l'amour" says Paul Adam, "il y a la lutte pour la vie, pour celle des individus, des groupes, des sociétés, des nations. Synthèse de forces qu'il faut enseigner." (3) And again "Or la littérature des romans a pour fin sociale d'enseigner à l'homme une science des milieux parmi lesquels il doit agir, lutter, réussir, fonder une famille,

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1. Bordeaux, H. "Les Ecrivains et les Mœurs" Page 16
2. Billy, André "La littérature française contemporaine" Page 87
3. Adam, Paul "La littérature et la Guerre" Page 118



1. "The 'roman de caractère' is excellently exemplified

in Guy de Maupassant's 'Le Cheval de bois', 'Le Cheval de bois' and 'Le Cheval de bois'.

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1. Bordenave, H. "Les Écrivains et les Mœurs" Page 10

2. Billy, André "La littérature française contemporaine" Page 87

3. Adam, Paul "La littérature et la Guerre" Page 118



procréer une descendance." (1) Albert Léon Guérard in "Five Masters of French Romance", speaks thus of this conservatism of the literature, "A paradoxical situation indeed, in free-thinking revolutionary France at the beginning of the twentieth century, the literary elite is overwhelmingly conservative not to say reactionary." (2)

Of course art in all its forms is based on old rules of tradition. It takes time for new rules to be freely used by all, so that literature is bound to be a conservative section of a nation's life. Writers in giving their picture of life, will gladly champion a dying cause which politically the world has cast out. Guérard thinks, "It may be an excellent thing for a democracy to tow in its wake an aristocratic literature but the essential factor is progressive democracy." (3) He further likens our modern literature to the tug boats in the river Clyde, which are not at the front to lead, but always at the back of the great steamers to steady them against the dangerous currents.

The Novel of Adventure. To continue, there is the novel of adventure, a new growth due in great measure to Pierre Loti. He writes of foreign lands and people, strangers to the French. So, with him entered a new feeling of internationalism in French literature. Due partially to the theatre, and partially to men like Loti, the French were brought into more friendly relations, with the world in a literary way. Along with this ran the Nationalistic feeling. This of course was made stronger by the Great War. France became vitally conscious of her love for her

1. Adam, Paul "La littérature et la Guerre" Page 118

2. Guérard, Albert Léon "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 184

3. Guérard, Albert Léon "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 188



proceeds and assistance." (1) "Almost from the beginning of the

history of French literature, there have been two distinct

currents, the "classical" and the "romantic". The

classical current, which began in the 17th century,

was literary since it was essentially a literary movement.

It was not in all its forms as based on

old rules of tradition. It takes the form of a

literary movement by all its literary forms, as a

literary movement of a nation's literature. It is

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people and her lands. The War greatly affected the literary world of France, as of other nations. It brought out many fine qualities of humanity that had been forgotten under the reign of Naturalism; true, selfless love, patriotism, heroism, more appreciation for the higher and more beautiful characteristics of humanity. "L'héroïsme inouï de notre jeunesse en armes, les dévouements des mères et des femmes pour leurs fils, pour leurs maris au feu, les dévouements de ces sublimes associées prévues par l'observation de Lucien Muhlfeld, contredisent le scepticisme des écrivains qui faussement dépeignirent une société généralement vicieuse, égoïste, lâche, éprise uniquement de ses appétits individuels, curieuse de ses filouteries, de ses adultères et de son ignominie politique. La manière va certainement changer. Finie la "comédie rosse". Finie peut-être cette centralisation littéraire de la vie française autour de l'épouse infidèle, de sa banale aventure répétée cent mille et un fois en cent mille et un romans divers, mais identiques sans que s'en aperçoive notre public grivois et malin. Très probablement l'amour sera remis à sa place étroite dans la vie que fixera, demain, la littérature." <sup>(1)</sup> There is another side of the war's influence of course, many of the best authors have not survived the struggle. If not killed during the war, they have not recovered from the blow, sufficiently to write. There are many war novels and post-war novels, but not many good ones. The novel, like the theater, seems to be stationary, waiting for new writers. However, as someone has said, France always has been able

1. Adam, Paul. "La littérature et la guerre. Page 120.



people and her lands. The War greatly affected the literary world of France, as of other nations. It brought out many fine qualities of humanity that had been forgotten under the reign of Materialism; true, selfless love, patriotism, heroism, more appreciation for the higher and more beautiful characteristics of humanity. "L'héroïsme nous a montrés jeunes en armes, les événements des mères et des femmes pour leurs fils, pour leurs maris en feu, les événements de ces années sanglantes prouvés par l'observation de Lucien Krullfeld, contredisant le matérialisme des écrivains qui faussaient dépeindre une société généralement violente, égoïste, lâche, éprise uniquement de ses appétits individuels, tourmentée de ses filouteries, de ses adultères et de son ignominie politique. La manière de certainement changer. Finit la "comédie française". Finie peut-être cette centralisation littéraire de la vie française autour de l'époque inférieure, de sa banale aventure répétée cent mille et un fois en cent mille et un romans divers, mais identiques sans que s'en aperçoive notre public grivois et malin. Très probablement l'avenir sera remis à sa place étroite dans la vie que fixera, demain, la littérature." "There is another side of the war's influence of course, many of the best authors have not survived the struggle. If not killed during the war, they have not recovered from the blow sufficiently to write. There are many war novels and post-war novels, but not many good ones. The novel, like the theater, seems to be stationary, waiting for new writers. However, as someone has said, France always has been said



smile so she will come out of this smilingly. Emile Bouvier in "Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui" sums up, "Tels sont les grands principes qui régissent les recherches modernes. Je les rappelle: substitution d'une psychologie fondée sur la notion de l'inconscient à l'antique mécanique des passions et des caractères - indépendance totale de l'artiste à l'égard de la vérité scientifique ou historique de la vraisemblance, de la ressemblance, c'est - à - dire, épanouissement intégral de la fantaisie créatrice - enfin recherche de la satisfaction littéraire pure, désormais isolée de la gangue intellectuelle ou sociale qui l'enrobait. Tout ceci se résume en une phrase: en admettant qu'il y ait quelque chose à comprendre, à connaître, à reconnaître, dans la littérature moderne, intelligence, approbation, reconnaissance ne sont pas l'essentiel; l'important au contraire, est de sortir du cercle des effets et des causes tracé par l'intelligence. Puisque la porte est fermée par la raison, l'art nous ouvre la fenêtre. Le saut est parfois un peu brusque, mais, au bout, c'est la liberté." (1)

#### THE NOVELISTS

For the most part, the novelists to be considered, some of the more important ones writing between 1900 and 1933, will be taken up in chronological order of their birth.

ANATOLE FRANCE, one of the greatest writers of France was born in 1844 in Paris and died in 1924. Anatole France was particularly fortunate in having his work admired by both the public and his fellow writers. All were conscious of his grace, the ease and



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ability of his writing. M. A. France was the son of a bookseller of Paris, M. Noël Thibault and always was interested in book and literary pursuits. He was, through his whole life, an ardent lover of France and all things French. As an artist, Anatole France cannot be surpassed, his is a place not to be lost. His style is one showing perfection of simplicity, with love of beauty and clearness, and full of the importance of form. He is a delicate artist with the keenest of wit, going from kind humour to bitter irony. A. France belongs to no school - he has written in his own fashion many kinds of literature, novels, short stories, philosophical and historical works, poetry, drama and critical essays. All through his work is to be noted his delicate, exquisite, flexible style, penetrating observation, humor, boldness and breadth of thought. His literary life can be divided into three periods - the first showing him an author free and open-minded, loving children and old scholars, full of curiosity and kindness, gentle spirited in spite of a slight irony. All of these characteristics are shown in "Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard", published in 1881, which brought A. France to fame. It is in a form which M. France knew well how to use - autobiographical - in many ways, Sylvestre Bonnard is the author. In this book, though the plot construction shows no skill, there is so much charm. M. France here, as in many of his works, shows the beauty of human life. The gentle old scholar Sylvestre Bonnard, having as companion a cat named Hamilcar, who seems almost master of the house, and to whom Bonnard talks at length, is the hero of the story. Bonnard helps support a poor family named Coccoz who rent his attic -



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he gives them wood and food. After the death of M. Coccoz, his wife leaves with her child. M. Bonnard, ever on the trace of valuable manuscripts, wants to find an original manuscript written by Jacques de Voragine - a collection of legends - La Légende Dorée. To find this, Bonnard voyages to Girgenti, a small Italian village, only to find it has been sold and the price of buying it back, too much for him. He tells his tale to a Princess and her husband Prince Trépof, who are fellow travelers. On Bonnard's return to Paris, he is given a huge Bûche de Noël inside of which, resting on a bed of Parma violets, is his precious manuscript - the gift of the Princess, who was Mme. Coccoz. In "Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard", there are really two stories - showing another characteristic of A. France, to write a series of loosely connected sketches. Again Bonnard is the hero of this second half - "la Fille de Clementine." Jeanne is the little orphaned daughter of Clementine, once loved by Sylvester. Bonnard adopts little Jeanne - after stealing her from a convent - the crime of the title. Through it all is an excellent portrayal of Bonnard and his gentle true love for Jeanne, and her care of and devotion to Bonnard. In the end Jeanne marries Giles and they have a son named Sylvestre who dies. The book ends with these words from the Bible "Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine." Also to this period belongs "Le Livre de mon ami" 1885, also biographical. The tiny boy Pierre is the hero. There are many interesting and human episodes, like the one of the Lady in white as the little Pierre called her. She lived with the lady in black, her aunt. The husband of the lady in white was away in diplomatic service, and little Pierre played at being



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her "little husband." He didn't like the intrusion of a friend who took up much of the time of the Lady in white. As he was about to persuade the Lady to run off with him - little Pierre intervenes and saves his lady from disgrace. The second period is shown in such books as "La Rôtissene de la Reine Pédanque", 1893, an anti-Christian and rather brutal book, "Thaïs" in 1890, - here Thaïs, a courtesan, is saved from her life of sin by a priest and hermit Paphnutius, who in saving her, loses himself. His pride in his own holiness undoes him. There is a current of unbelief in these books - and a strong destructive irony. "Le Lys Rouge", 1894, too belongs to this period. Thérèse Martin Bellême and Dechartre love each other. She has loved before and when Dechartre finds it out he is very jealous - and because of this "incurable retrospective jealousy" he drives Thérèse away. "Throughout the book", says Albert Léon Guérard, "can be felt a strange nostalgic love for Love - the pure, the terrible, primitive and eternal." (1)

After this period of religious unbelief and bitter keen irony, comes one that was affected much by the political situation of the day - the Dreyfus case in 1897. Anatole France felt this keenly and Anatole France, always a free-thinker, more than ever stressed his inter-nationalism which was mixed with socialism. In his books "L'île des Pingouins", 1909, a satire against both the political and the ecclesiastical, and "La Révolte des Anges", one sees the later discouragement and cynicism of A. France. Later in his life, France returned to the autobiographical in "Le Petit Pierre", 1918, and "La Vie en fleur", 1922.



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PIERRE LOTI whose real name was Louis - Marie Julien Viaud was born in 1850 at Rochefort. He died in 1923. To understand his work, one must realize that Viaud was an oversensitive child brought up entirely by women. He hated studying but loved music and the out-of-doors. At first he wanted to enter the ministry - he came of Huguenot ancestry - then decided to be a missionary, due no doubt to the tales of foreign places, brought home by his uncle and brother. At college, Viaud was the butt of all because of his retiring, sensitive nature. Finally Viaud entered the Navy, being gradually promoted to rank of Commander. His books are therefore really stories of his trips. Loti, as he will be called from now on, really created his own style. His books are neither novels nor travel books, they really are impressions. He makes the reader feel just what he wants him too. Barcourt calls him the "greatest impressionist of the pen."<sup>(1)</sup> Loti's descriptions are subjective, his psychology is not deep - his grammar is bad, his vocabulary poor, yet he detects at once what is major and what is minor. This poet shows friendliness and strong feeling, rather than passionate love and is remarkable for his spontaneity, charm, musicality and artlessness. There is a decided note of melancholy throughout his works. There seems to be a feeling of anguish, even. Loti was afraid of death. Loti was one of the few Protestant writers in France, yet on the surface, he was the least protestant of them all. Loti it is, who made France know other peoples and other lands, thus bringing into the literature more of the spirit of internationalism - a strong note in the reaction against naturalism and symbolism.



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born in 1830 at Rochefort. He died in 1913. To understand the  
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brought up entirely by women. He hated studying but loved music  
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- the cause of humanist honesty - then decided to be a missionary  
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uncle and brother. At college Vland was the butt of all because  
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All of his heroines are really the souls of the country they live in, for example, Aziyadé is the mysterious and voluptuous Constantinople, Fa - Tou - gaye is cruel Africa, Rarahu is a "child of the seven seas", Madame Chrysanthème is Japan, Gaud is noble Breton, Gracieuse is the coquettish yet pious country Basque. A partial list of his works shows the subjects he treated.

Aziyadé 1879                      laid in Turkey

This really is a collection of letters sent by Loti, the hero, home to his sister and a friend, Plunkett.

Le Mariage de Loti 1880 laid in Tahiti

Le Roman d'un Spahi 1881 laid in Senegambia

Mon Frère Yves                      1883 laid in Brittany

Pêcheur d'islande                1886 laid in Brittany and Iceland

This is one of his most perfect works, though perhaps not one of the most attractive. It is a sweet yet tragic tale. Yann Gaos loves Gaud Mevel, but he doesn't tell her of his love until an accident occurs. They are married and have six days of perfect joy, when he must leave as his business calls him. Gaud sees Yann leave with a sinking heart and with good reason, for with all her waiting and hoping, all the boats but Yann's come in. His boat never returns. "Fleurs d'Ennui" shows a witty Loti. Madame Chrysanthème 1887 and its sequel "Japonneries d'Antoine" depict Japan. "Le Roman d'un enfant" 1890 is autobiographical as is "Le Livre de la pitié et de la mort" 1891. In 1894 Loti was sent to the Holy Land and from that came "Le Desert" - a masterpiece of description, also "Jérusalem," giving a feeling







that Loti was disappointed in what he found there, and Galilée which has much more religious feeling and poetry in it.

Ramuntcho, 1897, shows the Basque provinces. In 1906, Loti was back again in Turkey on the banks of the Bosphorus which he thought was Paradise. That year Loti wrote "Les Désenchantées". The next four are concerned with War, "La Turquie Agonisante" 1913, about the Balkan war, shows a Loti critical of politics. "La Hyène enragée" 1916, "L'Outrage des Barbares" 1917, "L'Horreur Allemande" 1918, all of the World War. "Prime Jeunesse" 1920, is again autobiographical and "Un Jeune Officier Paune" 1923, are the collected letters of Loti. M. Lanson regards Loti as "un des grands peintres de notre littérature: Il se place à côté de Chateaubriand, par la fine ou forte justesse des tons dont il fixe les plus mobiles, les plus étranges aspects de la nature."<sup>(1)</sup>

#### Feminine Literature in General.

Of the feminine literature only three authoresses will be considered out of the many. Gyp and Madame Collette and Madame Rachilde. First something must be said of the feminine literature in general. This is a growing field for women, no doubt because of woman's rising place in France. Jules Bertaut in "Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui" says, "L'originalité du sentiment et de la pensée, du fond et de la forme, l'audace et l'esprit qui, à des degrés divers, ornent leurs écrits et contribuent à nous les faire aimer."<sup>(2)</sup> Because the women writers have done well, both in quantity and quality, they all work hard to keep their success. In general, the women writers always see the world through their own eyes, they cannot eliminate

1. Lanson, M. "Histoire de la Littérature française" Page 1089

2. Bertaut, Jules "Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui" Page 9



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de l'empire" 1915, "L'Orage des Harcours" 1917, "L'Horreur  
Algerie" 1918, all of the World War. "Prime jeunesse" 1920, is again  
autobiographical and "Un Japon d'été" 1923, was the collected  
letters of Loti. "L'Enfer de Loti" 1924, "On des grande  
peinture de notre littérature; il se place à côté de l'histoire  
pour la lire et faire l'histoire des deux dans la même  
colonne, les deux littératures se rejoignent." (1)

Female literature in general.

Of the female literature only three authors will be con-  
sidered out of the many. The first is Madame de La Fayette and Madame  
de Sevigné. The second is Madame de La Fayette and Madame  
de Sevigné. The third is Madame de La Fayette and Madame  
de Sevigné. This is a strange thing for women to  
write because of women's being a sex in France. This constant  
in "littérature féminine" says, "L'originalité de la  
littérature de la femme, de l'homme et de la femme, l'homme et  
la femme, c'est la même chose, c'est la même chose, c'est la même chose.  
Littérature à nous les deux sexes." (2) L'originalité de la  
littérature de la femme, c'est la même chose, c'est la même chose, c'est la même chose.  
Littérature à nous les deux sexes. In general, the women writers  
always see the world through their own eyes, they cannot eliminate



themselves from their work. Their feminine characters are much better than the masculin ones, which are very mediocre. They show great feeling but little imagination. Jules Bertaut says, "La sensibilité c'est proprement toute la femme"<sup>(1)</sup>, and again "En général, on peut le dire, l'imagination des femmes les laisse inertes."<sup>(2)</sup> They all seem to follow pantheism and show great "communion avec les forces naturelles." As for subjects, Love is their eternal one, seen through the eyes of themselves. There is very little, practically no mention of children among the women writers, and there seems to be no reason to explain this. They are much interested in showing the new woman's place in the world, for example, Collette Yver shows the scientific type of doctor and professors, though she is the only one who seems to favor woman's "place in the home". Gabrielle Reval shows the type of woman artist and literary worker. Marcelle Tinayre shows the woman journalist. Renée - Tony d'Ulmès shows the woman vitally interested in the social problems of the world. Mme COLLETTE WILLY, in real life Madame Henri de Jouvenel, was born in 1873 at Saint Sauveur - en - Puisaye. She first wrote salacious novels in collaboration with her first husband Henry Gauthiers - Villars, known as Willy. But since 1897 she has written under her own name. She is particularly clever writing about animals to which she gives almost human feelings. Colette is apt to be very complacent toward the low, base and naughty side of life. She knows the world, but writes of it through her own eyes. In a way she seems to be flirting with the reader. In "Vingt - cinq ans de littérature française",

1. Bertaut, Jules "Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui". Page 197

2. Bertaut, Jules "Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui". Page 203







E. Montfort characterizes her as "un mélange de pudeur factice, de sensualité roublarde et de sensiblerie dont le charme est immédiat, mais qui, pas plus que la "beauté du diable" ne saurait résister au temps."<sup>(1)</sup> Her novels are well written showing her knowledge of the science of rhythm and words. Representative works are, "Sept dialogues de Bêtes" 1897, "La Vagabonde" 1911, "L'Entrave" 1914, "La Paix chez les bêtes" 1916, "La Maison Eclairée" 1921 and "La Maison de Claudine" 1922. In her novel "Chéri", there is the common story of a woman and her lover.. Léa has Chéri living at her home. Chéri seems to have no more character than a household pet. Léa spends much time analyzing herself, for example - "Qu'est - ce que j'ai donc que je ne dors pas? "se demandait-elle vaguement. "Ce n'est pas la tête de ce petit (who is Chéri) sur mon épaule, j'en ai porté de plus lourdes.. Comme il fait beau....Pour demain matin, je lui ai commandé une bonne bouillie. On lui sent déjà moins les côtés. Qu'est-ce que j'ai donc que je ne dors pas? Ah! oui je me rappelle, je vais faire venir Patron le boxeur, pour entraîner ce petit. Nous avons le temps Patron d'un côté, moi de l'autre, de bien épater Madame Peloux...."<sup>(2)</sup> She dreads growing old and that Chéri may continue to love her, she finally sends him away. The short novel ends with Léa watching Chéri go away - "Léa laissa tomber le rideau. Mais elle eut encore le temps de voir que Chéri levait la tête vers le ciel printanier et les marronniers chargés de fleurs, et qu'en marchant il gonflait d'air sa poitrine, comme un évadé."<sup>(3)</sup> Mme. Colette who was once a stage mimic and comedian, tells very well stories of back-stage in

1. Montfort, Eugène "Vingt-cinq ans de littérature française" Page 75

2. Willy, Colette "Chéri" Page 16

3. Willy, Colette "Chéri" Page 62.







music halls and so on. "Les romans de Collette", comments Emile Bouvier in "Initiation à la littérature d'aujourd'hui", "nous donnent la même impression de complexité touffue et vivante, succédant aux schémas abstraits des analyses académiques." (1)

GYP, whose real name is Marie Antoinette de Riquetti de Mirabeau, Comtesse de Martel de Janville was born in 1850. She is a very fertile writer, having written more than one hundred novels which are very popular. Many of them are in dialogue form. In general Gyp is not always clever in making her characters, her older women are quite impossible and her men rather ridiculous but it is her "esprit vif", her Gavroche style, that makes her novels generally liked. She, too, writes from within herself. Gyp has collected a veritable mine of documents in the Parisian life of her time - especially about the spoiled children of society. She it is who has created that type of young girl who, under a very frivolous appearance, is after all rather sane, honest and logical, but above all independant. There is usually quite a humorous vein in Gyp's work. Some of her novels are "Petit Bob" 1881, "Petit Bleu" 1888, "Un Raté" 1891, "Un Ménage dernier cri" 1903, "Entre la poire et le fromage" 1909 and "Souricette" 1922. This is a charming book. Souricette is really the nickname of the heroine of the book, Armande. Armande, an orphan, was adopted into her uncle's family. He has two daughters whom Armande calls Tante Co, who is married, and Tante Do, whom Armande thought Monsieur de Faraman loved. Through Armande's childhood she and Martha, her playmate, played in the gardens of the Palais du Gouvernement during the formal teas. There one day she tells



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M. de Faraman her ideas of his love for her Aunt Do. All the world is surprised at his sudden departure the next day for Toulouse - and without making his adieux. Souricette was sad to think of what she had done, but noticed that Tante Do did not seem crushed by M. de Faraman's absence - in fact, Souricette finds out she has always loved and is to marry a man who has been in Tokio, Claude de Marincourt. After five years, de Faraman returns as Commander now, anxious to see his "little mouse", Armande. She however does not seem overjoyed at his return. One of his officers later tells him Armande is to marry M. Hector du Saint - Temple, a not too popular person. Faraman has all along really loved Armande and at the end of the book says "Trop tard - ma petite Souris s'est laissé prendre." MADAME RACHILDE born in 1862, probably has done the best characterization work of all the feminine writers. She truly imagines in her own brain her heroes and heroines. To return now to the men.

PAUL BOURGET is the next, born in 1852 at Amiens. Bourget is above all a writer of the psychological novel, his being at times rather complicated, one finds wheels within wheels. Someone has said that a typical Bourget story is a love crisis involving three, four, or five, people. He did introduce l'amour bourgeois into the French literature. Some do say that Bourget was a social climber. He, though a bourgeois himself, liked the high life of his country and usually his work is about that class. He gives many careful descriptions of interiors of their homes and so on. Bourget himself said that he wrote of the high class and



...the love for her kind no. All the  
...the next day for  
...and without telling his mother. ...  
...but ...  
...in fact, ...  
...and is to marry a man who has  
...After five years, he  
...and anxious to see his "little  
...the however does not seem overjoyed at his  
...Of his efforts later tells his ... is to marry  
...a not too popular person. ...  
...and at the end of the book  
...as little ...  
...probably was done the best  
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...1932 at ... Bourget is  
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...one has said that a typical Bourget story is a love affair ...  
...the old introduce ...  
...Bourget ...  
...though a Bourgeois himself, ...  
...and usually his work is about that class.  
...of ...  
...he wrote of the high class and



for them, because they were the only ones who had leisure to read and "time to think it over". He insisted upon absolute truth in his facts. In one instance he wanted to describe a certain disease and to learn about it, spent four months in a clinic. He did use the scientific method, it is true, but Bourget seems to have kept a personal element through it all. Bourget was a critic of the highest order. Bourget always admired the tradition and authority of both the monarchy and the church. His later books advocate a ~~return~~ to a stronger belief in the Catholic Church. "He, a psychologist who became a moralist, is the defender of the Catholic point of view."<sup>(1)</sup> Bourget was a man of broad culture and versatile interests. His style is noticeable for its strength, it has almost classical qualities of coherence and vigour. He was a skilled technician, a master of lyrical description, though sometimes his brilliant style seems to be the result of an effort on his part. Guérard thinks the "structure of his best novels is well-nigh faultless."<sup>(2)</sup> Some of his novels are "Cruelle Enigme" 1885, "Un Crime d'Amour" 1886, "André Cornélis" 1887. "Le Disciple" published in 1889 created a great stir. Young Greslou is a pupil of Adrian Sixte, a man who dispises all spiritual theories and who leads Robert Greslou in such a way that he loses all ethical sense. Robert decides to try a psychological experiment on the daughter of the family where /he tutors. He, a mental pervert finally wins her innocent love. When she finds herself simply a victim of his plot she commits suicide. Greslou is tried for murder and, during his trial, writes his life story to Sixte who realizes it

1. Guérard, Albert Léon "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 176

2. Guérard, Albert Léon "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 176







is through himself that Greslou has done this. Sixte feels remorseful and decides to tell the truth in court, but before he has time, Greslou's brother tells the story in court and then shoots Robert. Bourget, the moralist, again appears in "Comopolis" 1893, and "L'Etape" 1902, concerned with family problems; in "Un divorce" 1904, which is a plea against divorce. Others of his novels are "L'Emigré", "Le Démon de Midi", "Un drame dans le monde", "La Geôle" 1923, "Coeur pensif ne sait où il va" 1924, and "Mensonges", in which a Parisian woman has a husband who believes in her absolutely. However, she has a roué lover who supplies her with many of the luxuries of life. She finally meets a young poet whose mistress she becomes, he not knowing what sort of woman she is, due to her clever lies. When he does find out, he pleads with her to go away with him and leave all others, his love is strong enough to forgive. She refuses however and the poor lad attempts suicide.

RENÉ BAZIN shares with Henry Bordeaux the reputation of being the most widely read novelist among the other French novelists. He was born in 1853 at Angers and died in Paris July 21, 1932. He was not strong in his childhood and early youth, so he spent much time in the country learning then to know and love the simple, kindly folk about whom he afterward wrote so beautifully. As a young man he became convinced that France was being misrepresented to the world by so much of the literature dealing with the sex interest, so he determined to write differently. He believed in the novel as an education, and that literature was for the masses not for a selective few. Throughout all his







work, is a glorification of work, a great faith in humanity and all of his works are written in a charming wholesome style. Many consider Bazin one of France's chief novelists. Representative novels are "Une Tache d'encre" 1888, "De Toute son âme", 1897 "La Terre qui meurt" 1899, "LES Oberlé" 1901, "Donatienne" 1902, "La Barrière" 1910. After the war Bazin continued writing, apparently his style unaffected by it. He remained the charming painter of country life and the staunch supporter of tradition. "Il était quatre petits enfants" appeared in 1923. His last book is "Magnificat", a lovely thing. In true Bazin style, simply, powerfully, purely the story is told of these Breton peasants. Its style is direct and often beautiful. The hero, Gildas Maguern, wants to enter the church but does not dare at first tell anyone but his mother. Years later during war service at the front, Gildas is inspired by his chaplain's noble and courageous life to think again of the church. There are many difficulties, he is grown now, rather late to begin studying. His family is poor and his father wants him to help on the farm, and then his love for Anna his cousin. She too is pious and refuses to hold Gildas back. One enjoys the humanity of Bazin's stories. In this one for example, Gildas' father hopes that the boy may change his mind and be a bit more reasonable, to which the mother replies, "There is not much hope of that, seeing he is your son. How often do you change your mind? And there is even less, since he is in the right!" One feels through this book the vital importance of religion to these peasant folk. Gildas does go to







the seminary and there is an excellent description of the goodness, honesty and devotion shown there at the seminary.

MARCEL PRÉVOST was born at Paris in 1862. Prévost studied at L'Ecole Polytechnique but after 1890 gave his attention entirely to writing. He writes moralistic novels such as "La Confession d'un Amant" 1891, Then in "Chonchette" 1898, he attempts to revive the romantic novel. "Chonchette" par exemple, est un "essai de roman romanesque sans thèses sociales, théories médicales, métaphysiques". "Il y'a des âmes romanesques, c'est - à-dire pour lesquelles, par prédestination, les problèmes de la vie se posent avec plus de violence ou de complexité et des situations romanesques qui donnent à ces problèmes plus de pittoresque et de gravité. Ces âmes et ces situations doivent être la matière du roman."<sup>(1)</sup> Prévost's specialty is analyzing the feminine soul. André Billy says of him in "La littérature française contemporaine", "Marcel Prévost s'est spécialisé dans l'analyse de l'âme féminine."<sup>(2)</sup> And later "Le seul défaut qu'on puisse relever dans cette littérature pleine de finesse et de séduction, c'est une certaine égalité de température qui n'est pas toujours en accord avec l'objet de son étude, l'amour."<sup>(3)</sup> Prévost also devotes much time and effort to a study of cas de conscience, especially in the French middle class. The novel as Prévost writes it, would come under the definition of a social novel that Barcourt gives in "French literature during the last half century", "Those (the novelists) who consider their characters not as individuals, but in relation to the collective consciousness, or more narrowly as those who have in view

1. Mornet, Daniel "Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée" Page 126

2. Billy, André "La littérature française contemporaine" Page 74

3. Billy, André "La littérature française contemporaine" Page 75



the reality and there is an excellent description of the conditions,  
 honesty and devotion shown there at the time.

FRANÇOIS PREVOST was born at Paris in 1852. He died at

Paris in 1927. He was a writer of novels and a dramatist.

His first novel, "Le Capitaine Corcoran", was published in

1881. It was a success. He wrote many other novels, and

some of them were very successful. He also wrote

some plays. He was a very popular writer.

He was a member of the Académie Française.

He was a very good writer.

He was a very good writer.

He was a very good writer.

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some definite doctrine of sociology or political economy." (1)  
 At times Prévost gives some fine characterizations, for example, the brilliant analysis of German psychology, *M. et Mme. Moloch*. The style of Prévost's novels is easy and at times picturesque, though on the whole rather commonplace. "*Lettres de Femmes*" 1892, shows very well Prévost's style and method. These are letters supposed to be written by women to each other, the correspondant thinking no one but the recipient will see the letter. They are interesting and gracefully written, composed at mahogany desks in boudoirs, and are always intimate revelations of character and mood. Invariably the subject is a love affair of the writer with her husband, lover, or both. They are witty and ironic, giving very clearly the French standpoint of view. These would surely uphold the reputation of Prévost as a master of feminism. Others of his novels are, "*Le Scorpion*" 1887, "*Les Demi - Vierges*" 1894, "*L'Automne d'une femme*" 1893, "*Les Anges - Gardien*" 1913, "*Mon petit voisin*" 1922.

PAUL ADAM was born at Paris in 1862 and died in 1920. Adam contributed strongly to the reaction against naturalism. His characters are always his own, he created them, never copied them, but he was apt to generalize both his characters and his situations. This author liked to paint crowds rather than one man, a country rather than a man. He early introduced a symbolistic tone into his work and showed the influence of Balzac and Zola, by grouping certain novels into cycles, for example, the trilogy, "*Les Volontés Merveilleuses*" is "*Etre*", "*En Décor*" and "*L'Essence du Soleil*". Paul Adam was a greater







believer in intelligence than in feeling for a writer. He was not always clever in choosing the details, but, as a whole, his work is popular and even can be called powerful. In his series "Le Temps et la Vie", André Billy thinks that he "représente certainement la plus haute réussite du roman historique français." (1) All through Adam's work one feels his intense patriotism and love for all things French. A critic has said of him that his whole life, that of a daring initiate, is a hymn to his country. Some of his novels dealing with national subjects are "La Force" 1899, "L'Enfant d'Austerlitz" 1902, "La Ruse" 1903 where he has taken characters from Hugo's "Les Misérables" and amplified them.

MAURICE BARRÈS was born in 1862 at Charmes - sur - Moselle and died in 1923. When Barrès was twenty-six years old he quite startled the literary world by publishing his "Le Culte du moi": composed of three parts, 1, "Sous l'oeil des Barbares" 1886 2. "Un homme libre" 1889, 3. "Le Jardin de Bérénice" 1891. He himself calls them three ideologies. In them he advocates the adoration and cultivation of the ego. The three principles of the ego worship are, 1. We are never so happy as when we are in a state of exaltation, 2. The pleasure of exaltation is much increased through analyses; therefore, 3, We must feel as much as possible while analyzing as much as possible. This series has no plot, in fact few incidents. It is a series of essays on the author's interpretation of life and his philosophical doctrine. Philip is the hero of the tales. Barrès was the first, but not the last prophet of the ego. In 1894 appeared his book "Du Sang,"

1. Billy, André "La littérature française Contemporaine" Page 117







de la Volupté et de la Mort." Here appears a Barrès that seemed to "love the delicate corruption, morbidity and decay, the subtle fever of Venice." From then on Barrès seemed to renounce egoism and turn very strongly to nationalism and traditionalism.

"Maurice Barrès, pour quelques pays d'élection, la dignité des petits patries, la noblesse des existences vouées à une tradition laborieuse, avait donné à notre littérature provinciale une richesse et une indépendance nouvelles."<sup>(1)</sup>

In this period came "Les Déracinés" 1897. Here Barrès pictured, "young men estranged from their natural surroundings by moving to Paris and worse still, estranged from the culture of their race by the cosmopolitan ideal of such denationalized dreamers as Kent. They are young trees which will bear bitter fruit or none at all, in an

uncongenial soil."<sup>(2)</sup> The moral of the book is to go back to one's own province. Barrès' nationalism had a very tonic effect on the life and art of his time. One of his fine novels is, "Colette Baudoche" published in 1909. In this is a Prussian Doctor of Philosophy, M. Asmus by name who is teaching in Metz. He is a real German loving all Germany stood for.

He boarded at the home of two French women, young Colette and her mother, Madame Baudoche. Through them he learns to love the French and forget some German things. Eventually he falls in love with Colette, forgetting a German girl at home in Koenigsberg, whom he had intended to marry. M. Asmus and Colette are engaged. Colette likes and respects the professor though she does not love him. One day Colette goes to a big Mass for

1. Baldensperger, Fernand "L'Avant-Guerre dans la littérature française" 1900-1914" Page

2. Guérard, A.L. "Five Masters of French Romance" Page 224







the Dead held at the Cathedral. This is a Mass which upholds French loyalty to the past, its glory and its traditions. Through it Colette realizes she is French, and must continue to be, so she refuses M. Asmus. Barrès has done some splendid descriptive work, as when the Emperor and the royal family come to Metz. After Barrès' description of the flags, the costumes of the children who offered flowers to the Empress, and the horsemen, one feels he has truly seen the spectacle. In "La Colline Inspirée" 1913, there is minute realism shot through with poetry. The story centers around three brothers, the Baillards, all of whom are priests. These were strong influences in their community, though not considered successful in the eyes of the Church. Therefore the eldest and most ambitious, Léopold, was transferred to a small parish in Saxon where he continued his activity with a small band which was feverish to help him. The Church again dispersed the little band, but through it all Léopold keeps his energy, ambition and devotion. He finally dies in 1883, reconciled to the Church. This book is quite affected by symbolism. Barrès' style, while seeming to be a fusion of classical and romantic, is very artistic. It is full of simplicity of rhythm yet musical as poetry. There is great delicacy in the shades of word meaning he uses. His work reveals a keen sensibility and a subtle intelligence.

EDOUARD ESTAUNIÉ was born the fourth of February 1862, at Dijon. His father died before his birth, so the young Edouard and his mother lived with his grandfather. He studied at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris and, after graduation, he became a civil engineer for the Paris Postes et Télégraphes. Estaunié traveled







much in Belgium and Holland. In 1890 he wrote his first novel, "Un Simple". Estaunié served through the World War and in 1923 was elected to the Académie Française. This author has written many novels, mostly novels of analysis. His idea of life was, "Notre vie avouée n'est qu'un façade derrière laquelle se cache notre vie profonde, seule importante." He liked to study the human soul and the characteristics of man. His book "L'Appel de la Route" is a good novel, showing the author's theory that through suffering, man goes along the road of life to, its end, death. Three childhood friends meet for luncheon and discuss suffering. The book has three divisions, L'un d'eux commence, Un autre répond, and le troisième conclut. In these divisions each friend gives a story illustrating suffering. As it happens they are all telling a story about the same characters, each giving an entirely different point of view. This book gives Estaunié's theory of life that suffering is necessary and only through it, can the best or the worst character of a person be brought out.

PIERRE MILLE was born in 1864 at Choisy-le-Roi. Mille is a novelist, though he is probably better as a short story writer. He is an accurate observer endowed with a broad imagination. He it was, that helped introduce the novel of adventure which calls for a simple yet vivid style and a plausible imagination. Mille has all these qualifications. This again was a reaction against the crude facts of the Naturalists. Through this author, the French public was made acquainted with the colonial soldier,



which in Belgium and Holland. In 1880 he wrote his first novel, "The Doctor". Although a success, it was the 1880s and 1890s that he devoted to the French language. This author has written many novels, mostly novels of analysis. His idea of life was, "Nature is a series of events, but man's life is a series of events."

He liked to study the human mind and the characteristics of man. His book "The Doctor" is a good novel, showing the author's theory that through suffering, man goes along the road of life to the end. These chapters are not for the reader's benefit, but for the author's. The book has three divisions, from the beginning to the end, and is a masterpiece of analysis. In these divisions, the author gives a story illustrating suffering. As it happens, they are all telling a story about the same characters, each living at a different point of view. This book gives a theory of life that suffering is necessary and only through it, can the best or the worst character of a person be brought out.

THESE MILLS was born in 1884 at Quimper-le-Roi. Mills is a novelist, though he is probably better known as a story writer. He is an accurate observer endowed with a broad imagination. As it was, that helped him to write the novel of adventure which called for a simple yet vivid style and a plausible imagination. Mills has all these qualifications. This again was a reaction against the crude facts of the naturalists. Through this author, the French public was made acquainted with the colonial world.



especially through Barnavaux. There, Mille surely has created a type. In "La littérature française Contemporaine" André Billy speaks of this, "Pierre Mille nous fait lier connaissance avec le soldat colonial. Ce sont les innombrables histoires de Barnavaux, observateur et humoriste."<sup>(1)</sup> This character referred to, is the hero of the book "Barnavaux et Quelques Femmes" 1908. This is a collection of tales of military life in the African possessions of France, told by Barnavaux, a French Mulvaney. The episodes are slight, but in a manner full of pathos and humor, they vividly tell the life of a French soldier in his relations to the natives. Barnavaux, has great pride in the white race, loyalty to his corps, courage, simplicity of heart and some vices one might expect to find in that type of man. All through the book he reflects on the European law in its dealings with the natives. Marie-Faite-en-Fer is the heroine of the first tale. She is mistress of the regiment. She survives the climate, nurses the soldiers through an epidemic, is a tender mother to all and seems to possess all the virtues but one. "The Dead Ship", another tale, is full of the horrors of the deep sea. This is the story of the resurrection through the means of a storm, of an old slave ship with its oarsmen chained to it. In "Leper's Island", named Felicité on the maps, one sees the vengeance of a proud native girl on a too-bold white man. The "Man who saw the Sirens" gives us the amazing love affair of this man with a mermaid. "Barnavaux Victorious" shows a happy humor. It describes Barnavaux' encounter with the zealous police and the intoxicated marines, whom he tries to put under civil law and order.

1. Billy, André "La Littérature française Contemporaine" Page 99







ROMAIN ROLLAND was born in 1866, at Clamecy in Burgundy. Rolland is a great advocate of internationalism, in fact so much so, that he went to Geneva during the World War. All through his life is this spirit shown. Music and art were his chief interests and they are international. Rolland is well known for his books of musical criticism, such as "La Vie de Beethoven" 1903, "Musiciens d'aujourd'hui" 1908. From 1903 to 1910, he was a professor of History of Music at the Sorbonne. He also was an ardent admirer and follower of Tolstoi, and in 1911 wrote "La Vie de Tolstoi". Rolland a musician and historian, a cosmopolitan, was also an idealist. He never has written a frivolous book, he doesn't write for fun nor for money. He wants to reach the people and give them true pictures of men. Authorship is truly for him a mission. Many have thought that Romain Rolland is the author of one of the world's classics "Jean-Christophe". It is indeed a powerful, moving book. According to Albert Léon Guérard, it is "the story of a powerful personality, painfully emerging from the slime, conquering the sneering world without, and taming the beasts within".<sup>(1)</sup> This novel is in ten volumes and was published from 1904-1912, in "Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine" a youthful publication that, like Antoine's theatre, was for the purpose of publishing works that could not be otherwise published. Through it many a young man was brought to the public's attention. "Jean-Christophe" is a rather rare type in French Literature, it takes the hero from infancy to old age. There is no unity of plot, only the one character holding the ten volumes together. In many ways this biography is an encyclopedia of German and French life. Throughout

1. Guérard, Albert Léon (Five Masters of French Romance" Page 251



ROBERT ROSS was born in 1888, at Glasgow in Scotland. He is a great advocate of internationalism, and that he has so, that he went to Geneva during the World War. All through his life he has been a great worker. He has written many books, and his most famous are "The World of Tomorrow", "The World of Today", "The World of Tomorrow", "The World of Today", "The World of Tomorrow", "The World of Today".

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the book are grace and charm, excellent character sketches, internationalistic spirit, and at times, it is a bitter satire of the Parisian society. Since the beginning of the book is a study of childhood, this leads the vogue for that type of literature. Jean-Christophe, the hero, as shown during boyhood is probably Beethoven's early life, treated with some imaginative originality. "L'Aube" which is the first volume, is delightful as it pictures the child first becoming conscious of his surroundings, first his room, then the house, which belongs to his grandfather, Jean Michel, then the outdoor world. He finds beauty and also terror in the night time and shadows. He awakens to the sharp differences in classes, a sad awakening for the poor lad. Soon, too soon, he finds his father, also a musician like the fine grandfather, is a drunkard who gradually drinks himself to death. His family, the Krafft family, had come from Antwerp to a little town on the "Vater Rhein". Though not rich they were important because Jean Michel was the concert master of the Duke. After Michel's death, it fell to the young Jean-Christophe to support the family. He did, in spite of many embarrassing moments due to his crude, uneducated ways. The uncle Gottfried played an important role in young Jean's life. Gottfried had a fine influence on the lad, he kept him working hard on his music. The rest of the volumes carry Jean Christophe through his struggle as a musician. The book ends when Jean Christophe dies while conducting a dream symphony, his desire through all his life. It is a book that is enjoyable and ennobling, full of strength and power. R. Rolland







has written other books such as "L'Ame enchantée" 1922, and "Pierre et Lucé" 1920.

CHARLES MAURRAS was born in 1868 at Martignes. In Paris, after receiving his baccalaureate, he turned his attention to the study of English, Italian, and the ancient literatures. He soon attracted attention by his articles written for "La Cocarde", "La Revue Encyclopédique Larousse" and "La Gazette de France." Maurras was a writer against disorder, all kinds of disorder rampant in society and literature. He dearly loved his country and wanted for her peace, order, and stability, and for this he advocated a monarchy. Also he wrote of religion as a great stabilizer and influence for good and order. Representative works of his are "L'Idée de la Décentralisation" 1898, "L'Avenir de L'Intelligence" 1905, "L'Action française et la Religion Catholique" 1913, "Les Trois Aspects du Président Wilson" 1920, and "Les Amants de Venise", which is a scathing denunciation of free love. It is a story of the love affair of George Sand and Alfred de Musset in Venice. The book is divided into four parts. Part One, entitled "Elle" gives the ideas of George Sand as a woman, unattractive in appearance yet attracting attention. George "aimait comme elle eut regardé en voyage la teinte d'un beau ciel la grace d'un ruisseau ou le sauvage désordre d'une forêt - c'était un nouveau coin du voile universel qui se soulevait à ses yeux." Throughout, one feels her indifference. Part Two describes "Lui", Alfred de Musset, hypersensitive and nervous and subject to epilepsie. He was "une critique, un poete et un fou." Part Three entitled "Eux", describes their winter together in Venice. Because of the







differences in their natures there were many quarrels. One tried to influence the other unsuccessfully. George treated de Musset as a child and he naturally rebelled. While they were both ill in Venice, de Musset most seriously, Pagello was the doctor who cared for them. In Part Four "La Tragédie", George and Pagello run off leaving the sick poet which is tragic for him, but La Comédie is the part played by George and Pagello. The Postlude "Vérité et Poésie" shows the return of George to de Musset. In the end Maurras tells the effect of their love on these two, hurting both of them, not helping or lifting them. Then Maurras discusses the real, true, self-forgetting love in life.

ANDRÉ GIDE was born in 1869. He too, is a master of the novel of observation. Barcourt says of Gide in "French Literature during the last half century", "His style is peculiar; passing from exaggerated terseness to superabundance of images and epithets, it possesses force but lacks vitality."<sup>(1)</sup> Sometimes Gide seems to use too minute detail in his psychological analysis. Gide was a follower of symbolism in some books, especially in "La Symphonie Pastorale." The drama of this story is based on the impossibility of happiness or good fortune being born of ignorance. Under cover of the parable of the lost sheep, Gide has launched a heroine entirely ignorant of sin into this full modern life. A minister in a Swiss village, one day found a child, whom he called later Gertrude, in a straw hut on a hillside. She has been neglected so long that she was wretchedly filthy and in addition, had become blind and mute. Le Pasteur took her home to his wife. She was a good soul devoted to her children and her wifely tasks, but she did not always







understand Le Pasteur. At times, tired from his duties, he would come home longing for peace and joy, only to hear her tirades. Through the advice of the doctor, Le Pasteur begins teaching Gertrude to talk and understand life. Very soon the pastor's wife notices a growing affection of her husband for Gertrude. She bewails the hours devoted to Gertrude, that should be spent on their own children. Gertrude is eventually operated upon successfully and develops into a charming girl. Jacques, the oldest son, loves her but, because his father persuades him not to tell of his love, he goes into the Orders. Gertrude loves him too and when he does that, her only wish is to die. "La Symphonie Pastorale" which Gertrude could hear had much to do in developing her into the calm quiet person she became. After her sight was restored she realized that the love between her and Le Pasteur was wrong and that she truly loved Jacques. No one had taught her about sin, sorrow, and sadness. With the one she loved in the priesthood, and only sin and sadness around her, she dies. Le Pasteur then realizes his sin and kneeling by his wife asked her to pray for him. She simply says the "Notre Père". Other books of his are "L'Immoraliste" 1902, "La Porte étroite" 1909 in which Jerome loves his cousin Alissa, who was the child of a Huguenot father and a gay amorous Creole who ran away with another man. As the oldest daughter, Alissa was the confidant of her father. This turns her to fanatic piety. She thinks by self sacrifice she will be saved. She tries in vain to get Jerome to marry Juliette, her younger sister who adores him. Juliette finally marries an elderly wine grower, Edouard Teissières, whom she does not love.







Jerome is greatly puzzled by Alissa's actions. They both struggle against each other. He wants to marry her, she thinks earthly Love an obstacle to salvation. She finally goes to a nursing home and there dies. The theme of the story is renunciation in the search for perfection.

HENRY BORDEAUX was born at Thonon - les - Bains on Lake Geneva so he really is not a French author. However, he studied at Paris and later lived there entirely. His novels represent the everyday people of the bourgeoisie, showing the struggle between the individual and the family. He clings to the old gods, the rights of the family. At first with Bordeaux, the sinner was a loathsome object but later in his work he depicts the sinner as an object of pity. On the whole his novels present a wholesome view of life. He wrote "La Peur de Vivre" in 1903. In this is the splendid character Madame Guibert. Her husband, a doctor, had died and she and the daughter Paule, though poor are respectable people, not, however, recognized by their former friends who are wealthy. The son Marcel is to come home from his service with the Légion d'honneur. He brings much happiness and strength to his family. Alice, daughter of the proud egotistical Madame Dulaurens, is a friend of Paule's but afraid to say her soul is her own. Her mother rules her entirely. Madame Dulaurens has engaged her daughter to a M. de Marthenay a wealthy man whom Alice does not love. Marcel loves Alice and through Paule, Alice finds out and gives consent to have him seek her hand. Alice is, however, too weak to tell her mother or help Marcel in any way. It is a tragic scene when Madame Guibert, proud of her son, goes to







seek Alice for him. She is insulted and goes home weary, bewildered and hurt. Marcelle returns to war and Alice marries secretly loving Marcelle. At a dinner in celebration of the third anniversary of the "happy marriage" of Alice and M. de Marthenay, there are thirteen at the table, and while there, comes word of Marcelle's heroic death. Alice realizes she alone is to blame for his death and <sup>the</sup> Guibert's sorrow because of her weakness. Other of his works are "Les Roquevillard" 1906, "Les Yeux qui s'ouvrent" 1918, "La Croisée des chemins" 1909, "La Maison" 1912, "Les Pierres du foyer" 1916, "La Jeunesse nouvelle" 1918, and "Les Feux du Soir" 1921.

MARCEL PROUST was born in 1871. Proust seems to have had not curiosity about the world in general. He stays in Paris and so has a comparatively small field. Perhaps this accounts for his use of the "microscope". He seems to create a new introspection, a new inner world. He always seeks the hidden motives. Proust is liked by all, rich and fêted and above all encouraged to produce by all his friends. He is however, a sufferer from asthma which prevents his traveling about. His work has many splendid digressions, such as those on death and sleep in "Du Côté de Chez Swann", and throughout he shows a marvelous ability. André Billy characterizes him, "si Proust apparaît comme un surprenant analyste, une intelligence infiniment subtile, merveilleusement informée des démarches les plus obscures du coeur et de l'esprit" <sup>(1)</sup> Again Benjamin Crémieux says of him, "Cette hyper-sensibilité qui allait, au dire de ses familiers, jusqu'à la divination; une mémoire infailible; une dialectique verbale inépuisable; une culture philosophique, historique, scientifique et







et littéraire vraiment encyclopédique compos<sup>é</sup> à cet homme en lutte incessante contre la mort une physionomie déjà inoubliable." (1)

His art is almost universal, and surely he works for perfection in his novels. There is some satire in his work but it is usually a secondary thing. He discusses love but according to him, it too like all other feelings, comes from the imagination. If certain conditions are right, then love will follow. There is an absence of mention of either God or sin in Proust. His work in some ways seems to follow a musical composition, seeming to be most influenced by Wagner in his "Leitmotivs". For example in "Du Côté de Chez Swann", in the first volume, he names all the characters. At the end of that volume they are all characterized, as well as the secondary plots. It is really an excellent example of musical composition. His style is very difficult to read, since he used long involved sentences that must be read often to be understood. "A La recherche du Temps Perdu" in eight volumes is written as an imaginary autobiography. The narrator says, "when a man is asleep he has in a circle around him the chain of the hours, the sequence of the years." The first part "Du Côté de Chez Swann" begins with the little hero spending the summer with his parents. He is an oversensitive child who, in order to go to sleep, must be kissed good night by his mother. One evening when a M. Swann a rich Jew comes to dinner, he works himself into a dreadfully nervous state until his parents later come to see him. His father advises the mother to sleep in his room that night. Then follows a description of the house, the town and the townspeople seen through the boy's eyes. There are two walks he takes with his family, one







by Swann's home, the other by the Guermante's home. These two typify the two classes of people, Swann the man of the world, rich and careless of his morals, the other the old order of aristocracy. The boy meets one day, Gilberte the daughter of Madame Swann, who had been Swann's mistress, Odette. Then the story goes back thirty years to tell of Swann's love affair with Odette. She eventually tires of him and has affairs with other men. This makes Swann very jealous, and he only keeps her by being able to give her all the material things she desires. This love affair of this sensitive man and the stupid uncomprehending Odette is in contrast to the one later in other volumes, of the hero for Albertine. Through the first book the hero is not named but in later volumes he is called Marcel. The other books carry Marcel through life with the Guermantes people and through his love for Albertine, a young girl of the old aristocracy. Proust also wrote "A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs" 1919, which won the Prix Goncourt, and "La Prisonnière" 1924.

PIERRE HAMP was born in 1876. He is the exponent of the social novel. His are published as a series under the collective title "La Peine des Hommes." Hamp might be called a socialist with a passion for seeing and meeting the truth. He has brought into literature the beauty of work and sufferance of people. "Toute la vie humaine lui apparaît en fonction du travail et de la peine des hommes."<sup>(1)</sup> André Billy speaks of him in "La Littérature française Contemporaine" as an author "d'une oeuvre pleine d'intentions très nobles, malheureusement desservie par un style tellement recherché contourné, anti - naturel, qu'il est impossible aux meilleures







volontés d'accepter sa tyrannie." <sup>(1)</sup> Some of his works are "Le Rail" 1912, "Gens" 1917, "Le Travail invincible" 1918, "Les Chercheurs d'or" 1920, "Le Cantique des Cantiques" 1922 and "Le Lin" 1924. Pierre Hamp is very conscientious in the precision of detail he uses. This may cause a lack of charm, but it adds a great force to his work which is always well thought out.

JEAN GIRAUDOUX was born in 1882. Giraudoux has a great influence on today's writers, though being one of them himself. He is a cosmopolitan who uses fact and fantasy in a charming manner. He is a master of modern fantasy, yet there is something so satisfying about his work. His fantasy and lyricism are well under the control of common sense. He himself has lived a well filled existence. He has been a newspaper man, a professor and in the diplomatic service. It is through his work that one is aware of one of the new trends of literature, that is, turning back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not to underline every vulgar bit. Giraudoux has stepped very far from naturalism, and in his charming spontaneous fashion, makes the reader enjoy his books. "Images, notations, toujours, originales, toujours plaisantes ou cocasses ou doucement émouvantes débordent de toutes les pages. Le lecteur sourit, sympathise, consent au jeu, croit aimer Giraudoux." <sup>(2)</sup> is the comment of Benjamin Crémieux. Until 1914, most of his subjects were children or young people. After 1914, the War occupied much of his attention. Giraudoux was wounded in the Great War. His art seems a mixture of the idealistic, the sublime, the modern and the ancient world. His works are "Provinciales" 1909, which give beautiful pictures of French country life, "Lectures pour une ombre" 1917,

1. Billy, André "La Littérature française Contemporaine" Page 93

2. Crémieux, Benjamin. "XX<sup>e</sup> siècle" Page 100.







"Adorable Clio" 1920, "Suzanne et le Pacifique" 1921, and "Siegfried", which later was made into a play. This is a story of a man picked up in the German lines without clothing or any marks of identification. This man had no memory of who he was, <sup>He was in a hospital</sup> and from there taken by Eva to be taught. She named him Siegfried. He became Monsieur le Conseiller, a very influential man in Germany, and a very popular one. He always tried to find out who he was, and at the beginning of the book, there are many parents of lost sons coming to interview him. Finally Baron Von Zelton calls two of his French friends to see le Conseiller. These two are Geneviève and Robineau. When they meet Siegfried, Geneviève recognizes her fiance lost in the war, but Siegfried does not know her. He plans to take lessons in French from her. From then on it is a struggle between Geneviève and Eva - which will win Germany or France? Eva pleads that Germany can give him power, acclamation and wealth, Geneviève pleads that France will give him his own life to lead and that his dog is waiting for him. Geneviève wins and Siegfried bids farewell to Germany, and goes with her to be married and live in France.

GEORGES DUHAMEL whose real name is Denis Thévenin was born in 1884. He is a critic, a poet, and a novelist. Duhamel is particularly known for his war novels. He was a doctor serving in the hospital during the World War. There he saw so much suffering, one can't help feel the great pity he has through all his works. He paints the tragedies and without generalizing shows all the shades of emotion. He always brought out the problem of civilization and how it affected men. Duhamel was one of the two







founders of L'Abbaye. "La Vie des Martyrs" written in 1917 is a very great book. It is one of the finest and most poignant of the war books. Duhamel seems to know how to tell a human suffering with sound observation and intense compassion. "L'Histoire de Carré et Lerondeau", in "La Vie des Martyrs", is so appealing. These two men are both wounded in the same way. Their hips are broken by bullets. Carré, a man of great courage, dies after such a plucky fight. Lerondeau, younger and less courageous though he tries to be brave, is cured. He wrote in 1918 "Civilisation", which was the Prix Goncourt, "La Possession du Monde" 1919, "Les hommes Abandonnés" 1921, and "Lettres d'Aspasie" 1922. His latest book is "Tel qu'en lui-même enfin..." a hard title to translate. It is taken from the first line of a poem by Mallarmé! This book is the final one in a long series which has one hero, Salavin. The series is "Confession de minuit," "Journal de Salavin", "Club des Lyonnais." This series seems to be a search for saintliness. Salavin is a weak character of excellent intentions, but never quite able to carry them out. He wants to do good but he stumbles. In this final volume he has voluntarily exiled himself to Tunis, has committed himself to the most repugnant tasks, the most heroic acts and horrifying dangers. Thus he hopes to recover happiness. Of course he does not succeed. His wife who bravely and sadly has borne with him all their lives, watches him die. "Oh," murmurs Salavin as he dies, "if I only had another life. I think I would know what to do. How simple it would be." The philosophical lesson is that saintliness is easy by bringing happiness to those near us. Duhamel at the end says to Salavin, "Go back into nothingness, oh companion of my youth and my sheltered life."







You have suffered enough by me, and, I may add, for me."

ERNEST PÉROCHON was born February 24, 1885. He studied at the Ecole Normale de Parthenay. Since graduation he has been an instructor there. Pérochon is still one of the younger writers but he is already famous. Among his works are "Chansons Alternées", "Flutes et Bourdons" which are poetic works, "Le Creux de Maisons", "Le Chemin de Plaine" and "Nène" being some of his novels. "Nène" won the Prix Goncourt in 1920. This book is a very moving story of Madeleine, the servant girl on the farm of the widower Michel Corbier, which was called Moulinettes. Madeleine was beloved by all and gradually became mistress of the house and "Nène" to the children. Nène is the abbreviation of the French word for godmother, Marraine. Because of a quarrel between a Catholic farm-hand Boiseriot and a Protestant farm-hand Gideon, Boiseriot was sent away. He continually made life hard for Madeleine, and until Gideon was sent away for his year of military service he protected her. Michel finally married Violette, a village coquette. Violette, probably jealous of Madeleine's power in the household had her dismissed and thus began Madeleine's torture, for she had loved Michel and his family. The children turned from her, her own brother was intoxicated too often, and finally when life was too cruel to her, Madeleine threw herself into the sea after one last visit at Moulinettes, where they were all thoughtless of her. The story well shows the ability of Ernest Pérochon.







HENRI BÉRAUD one of the well known authors of today was born in 1885. He is still living in Paris. Among his novels are "Les Morts Lyriques", "Le Vitriol-de-Lune", "Bristanclaque, La Condole-aux-Faquines" and "Fleurs et Couronnes." Béraud was opposed to André Gide in his championing of the classic revival. Béraud is a pseudo-historian in "Le Vitriol-de-Lune, pseudo-journalist in other books and pseudo-psychologist in "Le Martyre" de l'Obese." This last mentioned won Le Prix Goncourt in 1922. The book is written in the first person and has few characters, the speaker who is a fat man, his mistress and her husband. The plot is very simple. The wife sees her husband kiss a chambermaid, so she rushes to their friend, le gros. These two run away and spent the rest of their lives running away from the husband who continued to follow them. The book is very clever, bringing out both the humor and the tragedy of the fat man. Béraud dedicated the book to Maréchal Joffre and others in this way - "ce livre que les maigres prendront pour un livre gai".

JULES ROMAINS born in 1885, must be mentioned, for it is he who invented "l'unanimisme", defined thus by Benjamin Crémieux "l'âme sommaire, simpliste, impulsive et inintelligente de la foule moutonnière, l'unanimisme méprise cette masse amorphe, passive. Ce qui l'intéresse, c'est la groupe. L'unanimisme est créateur d'ordre." (1) There seems to be a maturity about his work that is lacking in some other writers. He is a daring yet dogmatic theorist. This new movement is a great thing among the new writers. "Nous sommes plongés dans la vie, toute la vie avec ses joies et ses tristesses: c'est notre façon à nous d'y collaborer. Accomplissons notre tâche sur la terre



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qui est d'inscrire en des paroles belles la vision que l'homme a du monde à ce moment du temps infini pour la transmettre à ceux qui nous succéderont. En même temps que des artistes, soyons des hommes."<sup>(1)</sup> In his "Mort de Quelqu'un" he shows, his theory of the ties which bind men together into groups even though they do not know each other. Here the owner of a large apartment house in Paris dies, absolutely ignored by his fellows, yet the death of this man reacts in round-about ways on the lives of all the rest. His later works still showing this tendency, show a love for the joy of life and an exuberance and sense of the comic that promised much for the future.

ANDRÉ MAUROIS was born in 1885 at Elbeuf. He is particularly known for his books depicting English life and characters. Since he has spent some time in America, we may expect to see ourselves treated by this author. He is a man d'esprit who knows and can write about real life. He is a keen observer with the manner of a rather gay philosopher. In "Les Silences du Colonel Bramble", and "Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady", What a perfect image of an Englishman there is! But only a Frenchman could draw it with so much taste and finesse. These are stories of the English officers during the World War. Maurois wrote out of his own experiences as he was an interpreter during the war.

The Present Trend. The War has left its mark on the novel as well as on the theatre. Montfort says in "Vingt-cinq Ans de Littérature Française, "La Guerre, oui la guerre; un silence immense le fracas des armes, mais les hommes muets".<sup>(2)</sup> The present trend however seems to be a sane and well balanced realism with a revival of the

1. Baldensperger, F. "L'Avant-Guerre dans la Littérature française" Page 69

2. Montfort, E. "Vingt-cinq Ans de littérature française" Vol. II Page 314







the romantic and the classic beauties in literature. Thus we find the writers of France going from Naturalism to Symbolism, to a revival of Romanticism and Classicism to a new school still in the making.







## SUMMARY

There is to be found in the present day drama the influence of the Naturalist movement, first started by Eugène Scribe and Victorien Sardou. These two men valued the "pièce bien faite." To this, however, Emile Augier and Alexandre Dumas fils added more consideration for the portrayal of character. The Naturalist school aimed to give "a slice of life" in its most real phase. The writers, however, too often gave only the gloomy, morbid side of life and were too fond of abnormal characters. The dramatists seemed to center too much interest on the detail and atmosphere and not enough on the plot. Through it all they used the scientific method so much used by Zola. The Théâtre libre introduced many new and obscure dramatists. It overturned the old conventions by emphasizing a well-trained company as a whole, not one or two fine stars with a weak caste, and particularly by increasing the use of stage realism.

Few lists of dramatists can aim to be complete. The effort has not been to introduce in this thesis every French writer of plays. The purpose has been to note the outstanding men in this branch of literature, with interpretation of the contribution of each to its development. Many of these men did not survive the World War. Those who did survive, in many cases ceased writing because of the deadening influence of this world strife. There is







now a period of waiting for new individual dramatists or a new school of writers.

The novel has also felt the influence of the Naturalist school with Emile Zola as the leader. The novelists of the early twentieth century worked also under the Symbolist movement, as shown by the work of Paul Claudel and Maurice Maeterlinck. There is, however, a tendency to get away from the gloomy naturalism, and a growing desire to please the reader by picturing the happier side of life. So there is once more a growth of romanticism and with it a renewed interest in style and form. But the psychologist in literature is still evident as is the "roman de mœurs."

The novel of adventure is the latest type introduced into this period and is yet in its early stages of development. One hesitates to predict how far this style of writing will influence the fiction of the future.

In the few years previous to the World War French literature was strongly permeated with the internationalistic spirit. Many writers introduced characters and scenes from other countries, thus evidencing the wide sympathy which they themselves felt. During the war the literature of France naturally became intensely nationalistic. Exceptions to this almost universal attitude were rare. The intensity of this nationalistic feeling has been modified somewhat in the last few years, and will undoubtedly be more



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so in the future.

The present trend in both drama and novel is toward a sane realism. Each has passed through the period of naturalism and abnormal realism into a revived romanticism. The epoch is by no means closed. France seems to be waiting for new men of letters.

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